TALK OF THE TOWN / A12

What's it all about?
Israel's endless war with the Hezbollah, Hamas guerillas

WORLD / A21

Cool it, Europeans are told
shower often, drink lots of water as record-breaking heatwave set to last another week killed 31, melted roads

OPINION / A11

Randy David: In 'instrumentalizing' every state institution to ensure her political survival, President Arroyo has unwittingly exposed the violent foundations of our unjust social order

Ex-communist finds purpose-driven cause

By Blanche S. Rivera

HE HAS COME A LONG WAY TO BE ALMOST exactly where he was 30 years ago—a place of mobilization for battle.

Renato P. Constantino, by his account a former cadre of the National United Front Commission of the Communist Party of the Philippines,

EX-COMMUNIST, A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Sunday, July 23, 2006 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 31 / No. 225 P18 newsinfo.inq7.net

Marines still restive; 2 colonels quit key posts

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE DECISION OF THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP to start court-martial proceedings against 16 Marine officers, including ten Medal of Valor awardees, implicated in the purported coup plot in February has again stirred a hornet's nest in the Armed Forces' most battle-hardened unit.

MARINES, A2

PARIS OF THE MIDDLE EAST! Long before the Hezbollah guerillas controlled southern Lebanon, that was the tagline of the country's capital Beirut. With its wide boulevards, the city is the banking center with the largest port in the eastern Mediterranean. Sited on an settlement dating back 5,000 years, the city has a population over 1 million, more than 10,000 of them Filipinos. Beirut is 41 km from Israel's Galgeta. ...or

OFWs told: Pack up, go

WHAT'S INSIDE

Tiger Woods
leads the British Open after 2 rounds, but nipping at his heels is a familiar rival aching to get rid of that "pain in the neck."
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Look who's reading
the INQUIRER, and that's straight talk direct from the Queer 5
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Why the 'Mr. Suave'
look is 'in' among OFWs in the Middle East
GLOBAL PINOY / A20

Flipping over
flip-flops, or is it just a fl(beeting fancy?
SUNDAY BIZ / B1

GMA orders evacuation; Israelis mass at border

By Volt Contreras and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ISRAEL MASSED THOUsands more reservists on its border with Lebanon yesterday, prepared to mount incursions aimed at destroying Hezbollah positions and warning that it would not rule out a full-scale invasion despite mounting calls for a ceasefire. (*Story in The World, page A22*)

As the conflict claimed its first Filipino casualty—a domestic helper (*See story on page A16*)wounded after the Israeli bombardment began last week—President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the full evacuation of Filipinos stranded in the Hezbollah-controlled southern Lebanon "in the face of unrelenting violence and strife."

"Just pack up and go"—that was the message the Department of Foreign Affairs sent out to the OFWs in southern Lebanon, mainly based in the city of Sidon, about 40 kilometers south of the capital Beirut.

There were conflicting figures on the number of Filipinos trapped in the southern part of the country. The DFA estimated there were 2,000, but Special Envoy Roy Cimatu said the bulk of Filipinos in southern Lebanon had been evacuated or were informed of the situation, and that only 10 to 15 remained uncertain of his.

OFWs TOLD, A9

DANGEROUS CROSSING (at right): Israel is massing tanks and troops in the Israeli town of Avivim adjacent to the Lebanese border but is not going in all the way in pursue its war on Hezbollah. The defense ministry says only limited incursions are planned at this time. (Above) Evacuees pack boats like this one making its way to a ship during a UN evacuation operation at Tyre in southern Lebanon.

For $35M, take a walk in space, 'it's beautiful'

WASHINGTON—YOU DON'T have to be an astronaut anymore to experience walking in space. All you need is $35 million and the willingness to risk your life.

A private Virginia firm that already has sent three super-rich men to the international space station for $20 million each announced Friday it would offer an even rarer adventure: A stroll outside the space station for an extra $15 million.

"It is the holy grail of spaceflight; it's something very few of the astronauts and cosmonauts have done," said Eric Anderson, chief executive of Space Adventures Ltd.

Added former NASA spacewalker Rusty Thornton, who is on the firm's advisory board: "It's just sort of the feeling of freedom, that you are your own satellite."

With the blessing of the Russian space agency, Space Adventures is arranging for the first spacewalking tourist to go into orbit in about a year or so, Anderson said. The trip would involve a launch in a Soyuz capsule, an eight-day stay aboard the international space station and a 90-minute spacewalk in a Russian spacesuit. An extra month would be added to the six-month cosmonaut training.

The plan still needs the approval of the other 15 partners in the international space sta-

FOR $35M, A4

THE STATE OF THE NATION

GMA is 'Superman' on economy, but not in politics

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Dexter L. Lacza

(Second of a series)

IF PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO were Superman, the economy would be her source of power and politics would be her kryptonite.

On the eve of her annual State of the Nation Address, there is a general upbeat perception in interviews conducted by the Inquirer that she has passed her economic goals of fixing the budget deficit, boosting confidence in the economy and creating more jobs with flying colors.

There is also a feeling that Ms Arroyo has failed miserably in her political objectives—to gain the trust of the masses, reconcile with her political foes and negotiate an end to the communist and Moro insurgencies.

-TEAM *Report*
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

"Fiscal management is her biggest achievement," said Donald Dee, who heads the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "We can see she is very focused on this one."

Francis Chua, president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc., said the President was moving closer to a zero-budget deficit in two more years.

"Her achievements become more remarkable in the face of the global and local problems that she has had to deal with in the last five years," Chua said.

While the President might have shortcomings in politics, she should still be commended for her efforts in trying and

GMA, A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Second FRONTPAGE

SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2000

WEATHER FORECAST

Coast Guard exec, 5 NPA rebels killed

8 hurt in 1st major Bicol clash since declaration of all-out war

By Bobby Lobodan, Ephraem Aguilar and Delfin Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Luzon Bureau

SORSOGON CITY—FIVE COMMUNIST GUERrillas and a Coast Guard officer were killed and seven others wounded when New People's Army rebels launched simultaneous attacks on the police and traffic management offices and Philippine Coast Guard station in Matnog town yesterday.

The attack was carried out by about 200 NPA rebels who reportedly burned two buses, two jeepneys, an ambulance and two motorboats, said Senior Insp. Jesus Collada, police chief of Matnog, a coastal town on the tip of the Bicol peninsula.

The rebels attacked before dawn yesterday, firing on officers at the police station and the Coast Guard station before engaging security guards in a shootout.

Cafga, volunteer troops and a group of soldiers waiting for a ferry ride backed police in repulsing the assault, forcing the guerrillas to withdraw after two hours, said Brig. Gen. Antonio Bernardo, commander of the Bicol Army Command (Bicom).

Collada said the rebels started their attack at around 3:45 a.m. when they fired rocket-propelled grenades at the police station and the Coast Guard station, triggering a gunfight.

Cafga volunteer troops and a group of soldiers waiting for a ferry ride backed police in repulsing the assault, forcing the guerrillas to withdraw after two hours, said Brig. Gen. Antonio Bernardo, commander of the Bicol Army Command (Bicom).

Bernardo Pendilla, chief of the Matnog Coast Guard station, died in the exchange of gunfire, said Lucito Madrueng, the third director of the Maritime Industry Authority.

Two KBL rebels were killed and four Matnog police reinforcement group, another Coast Guard officer and several civilians were seriously wounded in the attack that authorities said was the first major rebel offensive in Bicol since the government declared an all-out war against the insurgents.

Collada said the attack started at around 3:45 a.m. when the rebels showed up at the police office in two boats from Donsol, two jeepneys and an ambulance. Another group arrived at the Matnog bus terminal on board two motor launches.

Collada said the insurgents immediately started firing using high-caliber weapons, grenades and bombs.

There were over eight casualties of the Matnog police at the station at the time of the attack but the rebels hauled two to their dens, Collada said.

The firefight lasted until about 6 a.m. when reinforcements from the Philippine National Police Provincial Command led by Senior Supt. Joel Napoleon and Army soldiers arrived, forcing the attackers to withdraw.

Collada said three members of the NPA were killed instantly after they were peppered with automatic bullets while attempting to enter the police station.

The guerrillas took their two other slain comrades and the wounded in their escape, he said.

Three firearms, two improvised explosive devices and an unexploded rifle grenade were later recovered.

While the police station was being attacked, other rebels were firing at the Coast Guard office in the ferry terminal where Pendilla was killed and PO1 Nelson Haro was wounded.

Another group of rebels attacked the TMC office where SPO2 Eduardo Elmarino was wounded. Still another group harassed a Cafga detachment here 45 km to Elmarino from the police station.

The rebels withdrew when they heard helicopters carrying Army and police personnel approaching Collada said.

He identified the wounded police personnel as SPO1 Eladio Ramos, SPO2 Bruce Cobos, PO1 Cedric Hidoc and PO1 Edward Gaviola.

A civilian identified as Tatang who served as a cook at the police station was also wounded.

A municipal councilor from Juban, Marcelo, who was waiting for ride to his province, was also reportedly wounded in the crossfire.

Repulsing the attacks

Aregos said 18 Army soldiers had just arrived at the Matnog port from Manila where they had taken part in a military exercise.

They were returning to their units in Sorsogon and were waiting to take the ferry when the attack occurred.

"Their presence greatly helped in repulsing the attackers," Aregos said.

Bicol police director Senior Supt. Victor Boco praised the members of the Matnog police for their gallant stand in defending the station and assured them that they would be given promotions and recognition.

"It was a heroic act which deserves proper recognition," he said.

Non-PNP Director General Oscar Calderon was subdued after go to Matnog today to give the awards to the Matnog police officers.

The Solcom meanwhile dispatched four Air Force helicopters and launched a pursuit operation against the rebels who fled in the direction of Casiguran.

Meanwhile, fighting between government forces and NPA, which broke out again in Quezon province, leaving one Army soldier dead on Friday, a police report said.

The report identified the slain soldier as Cpl. Lawrence Layog, a member of Alpha Co. of the Army's 76th Infantry Battalion.

On Tuesday, another group of soldiers engaged an estimated 20 heavily armed communist guerrillas in Sitio Villamanda, Barangay Nito, in a spirited town.

No casualties were reported on both sides after the 20-minute fire fight, another police report said.

MILITARY BOMB DISPOSAL experts deliver several suspected land bombs left on the road Tabla Bridge outside Matnog by NPA rebels who attacked the police and Coast Guard stations in the town.

AN OPEN LETTER TO SENATOR JUAN FLAVIER AND REPRESENTATIVE CYNTHIA VILLAR

For one month now, we have brought to national attention our collective indignation against the callousness of the Board of Regents of the Philippine Normal University in installing Atty. Lutgardo Barbo as President.

We have long endured your silence and indifference on this issue. We find your lack of interest strange, if not disappointing, considering your avowed personal commitment to Philippine education. Aren't your committee headships on higher education for the Senate and the House individually borne out of genuine concern for our learning institutions?

Reaching you personally we have tried without success.

We have always taken pride of PNU as no ordinary government agency: her state of affairs defines the condition of the whole educational system in the country. PNU supplies the lifeblood of our schools. Her triumph is a national triumph; her malady becomes a national malady.

The conscious importance that PNU holds makes us expect your individual and active presence in the BOR meetings, particularly where the issue at hand is the choice for the next president. Your absence from the PNU BOR is abominable. **Beyond the legal acumen of your representatives, we expect no less than the moral rectitude of your high offices which after all are accountable to our people.** We missed your statesmanship and wisdom which could have enlightened us all.

That both of you have allowed your representatives who lack public accountability to make landmark decisions on your behalf, such significant certitude as choosing a President, eloquently bespeaks of the little regard you have for the Philippine Normal University that has guided the course of the nation, and which continues to steer her destiny way long after your legislative stints have ended.

As we demand for your moral explanation to the PNU community and to our people who have placed you where you are now, we challenge you to stand and help save PNU and Philippine education by the power of your moral leadership, political maturity, and genuine commitment to serve our country.

SAVE PNU. SAVE PHILIPPINE EDUCATION
Philippine Normal University
Taft Avenue, Manila

San Juan's affidavit clears us, says Satur

By Norman Bordadora

MANILA, PHILIPPINES — Satur Ocampo said the affidavit of Lt. Lt. Lawrence San Juan implicating former Sen. Gregorio Honasan in the aborted Feb. 24 coup cleared the so-called Bonacci 5 and Magdalena Bay Cesspit Defense of the rebellion charges filed against them.

Ocampo said there was no mention of him and fellow militant party-list members Teodoro Casiño, Joel Virador, Rafael Mariano, Liza Maza and Satur in San Juan's affidavit detailing the leftist rightists plot against the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"From the statements [San Juan] supposedly sent in meeting with Sen Juan in... Batangas was not mentioned," Ocampo said during the weekly Kapihan sa Sulo news forum in Quezon City.

Ocampo, Casiño, Virador, Mariano, Maza and Bello are now charged with rebellion following the alleged attempt to overthrow Ms Arroyo in February.

All of them were accused of being members of the Communist Party of the Philippines and of committing withdrawal crimes in a bid to oust Ms Arroyo. (See related story on Page A7)

In the developed, a former labor attaché yesterday confirmed that a meeting of individuals suspected of plotting against the Arroyo administration took place at his home in Wasshington.

Ambassador Raymundo Benigno said he also told the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group that a member of his household had told him that Honasan was present during the meeting.

"I was not at the meeting. I was [at work at] dinner," Benigno said of the same breakfast forum.

"Anyway, I told them that my household told me that a person that looked like Honasan was there," he added.

But Benigno dismissed his employee's story. "The cook's source is unreliable. ... He's an unlicensed broadcaster here I says."

He said the meeting at his home was arranged by "a friend" who asked him for some room on a cable venue for the group's conference. He declined to identify the "friend."

Why Terminal 3 ceiling collapsed

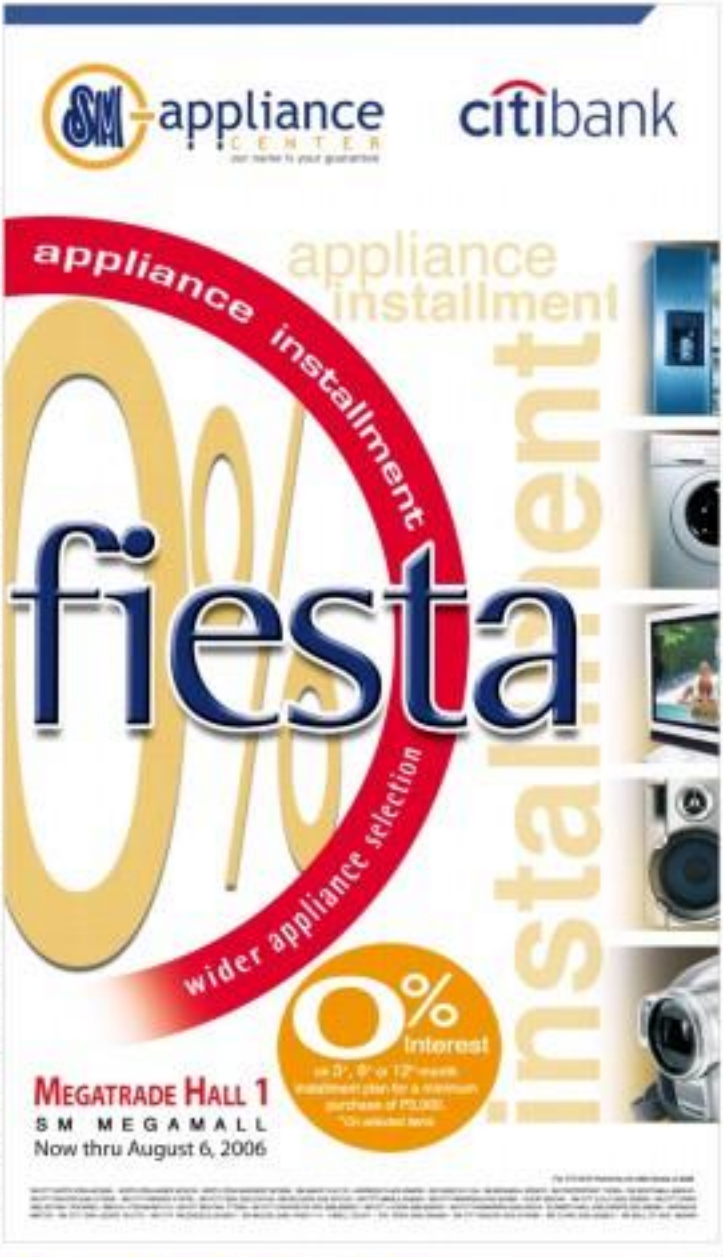
LACK OF DETAILED PLANS, THE WRONG choice of materials and poor workmanship caused the collapse of a portion of the Naia Terminal 3 ceiling last March, an incident that further delayed the opening of the commercial facility.

These were the findings of the Association of Structural Engineers of the Philippines which airport officials earlier tapped to investigate the March 27 incident, the Manila International Airport Authority said yesterday.

In a statement, the IMAA said the ASEP had observed the following:

- The ceiling was constructed "without the benefit of detailed shop drawings... which should have included the position of the reinforcing stiffener, connections of the framing system and other important information that could have better guided the construction."
- Some materials used, like the wall angles, "did not meet minimum required specifications."
- There was "a wrong choice of ceiling or wall suspension."
- The quality of work was "not as per and in accordance with minimum acceptable practice, thus diminishing the overall factor of safety of the total ceiling system."
- Laboratory tests of the individual components, however, revealed that safety factors had been met.

In the light of its findings, the ASEP recommended that other "similarly built" sections of the Terminal 3 ceiling be reinforced, MIAA said. Tob Castro-tus



Ex-communist finds …

From page A1

is now the coordinator of the National Purpose Driven Congress, an event that will launch the Global PEACE Plan to fight poverty, corruption, disease, illiteracy and spiritual emptiness.

The Global PEACE Plan by Rick Warren, author of "The Purpose Driven Life," will be introduced to church workers, political leaders, nongovernment organizations and concerned individuals in the Philippines during the congress on July 25 and 26 at the Philsports Arena (formerly Ultra) in Pasig City.

This is the first time that Warren, whose book has sold over 100 million copies worldwide, will be in the Philippines after releasing his bestseller.

The Global PEACE Plan is a lay grassroots-based movement that is aimed at mobilizing the world's 2.3 billion Christians to address the five global ills.

PEACE stands for Plant churches to address spiritual darkness, Equip servant leaders to address corrupt leadership, Assist the poor to address extreme poverty, Care for the sick to address pandemic diseases, and Educate the next generation to address illiteracy and lack of education.

'Exactly the same'

Communism is mobilizing around 20,000 people for the congress.

"When you do in the [revolutionary] movement and what you do in the church are exactly the same. The only difference is the cause for which you're doing it," he told the reporters in an interview.

Communism joined the CPP in 1977 and started out as a young activist. He climbed up the party ladder to become a full-time cadre during the time when the rebel force was at its peak and organizing the most impressive mobilizations in Metro Manila, including an infiltration of the crowd during Pope John Paul II's visit in 1981.

He ended up in detention in Camp Crame in 1988.

"If I could give my life to that calling, why not here where the call is also to mobilize people for a cause?" he said.

Reformations

The Global PEACE Plan started in the United States last year.

Supported by his SaddleBack Church in California, Warren is now making the rounds of Asia to introduce the movement whose goals are, at the very least, ambitious.

"Reformations always start with the peasants; they don't start with the elites," Warren said in a statement.

It is a belief that Communist cleaves…one that fueled his passion in the revolutionary movement for 18 years.

Coming from a poor but religious family in Cavite, Communism grew up believing that if he committed a good person despite trials, the heavens would smile on him and change his fate.

Being the eldest in the family he worked his way through college, laboring as a factory hand and a garbage collector. He earned P8 a day, gave half of it to his family and could afford to eat only the 25-centavo servsing kalay for years.

In 1975, his sister Ruth was diagnosed with rheumatic heart disease…and the medicine that could save which the Communist family could not afford.

Lacking the P320 needed for her cure, Ruth died.

Questioning God

It was this fact that led Communism to question God. He began to face the system of government, even the Church, which could not help poor people like his family.

The disillusioned young man was eventually joined a regular study group at youth activists who discussed the works of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Tsetung.

Spurred by the idea of people and nations ruined by the communists and eligible to all as needed, he devoted his life to the revolutionary movement.

In the mid-1980s, when the CPP was climbing the ranks of supposed deep-penetration agents, Communism was among those at the party's helm. But the purge, which killed around 3,000 of his comrades, nagged at his conscience.

"I became confused. What right did we have to determine the lives of others when we ourselves were not beyond reproach? What was once a choice assignment for me became a living hell. It was then that I said, 'If there is a God, He would take me out of this,'" he said.

His "rescue" came in the form of an arrest in August 1988. He was detained at Camp Crame for over a year.

Kindness

In prison, Communism found kindness in his arresting officer, then Capt. Bulfagi Tiu (now superintendent of the Philippine Bureau of Fellow Aviation).

At first he thought it was just a ploy to break him down, but when Tiu's father and brother, who were pastors at the Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, started visiting him and telling him about God's love and forgiveness, he relented.

In an affidavit, he admitted his involvement with the CPP—but declined the government's request for him to turn state witness.

Once, brought before then President Corazon Aquino, Communism was asked to help in the fight so that he were set free. He said he would do the same thing—serve the people.

"I was serving the people then, but I was serving their use of hatred. Now, the propelling spirit is love, and all I want to do is to obey God's will," he said.

Out in the open

Three days, the rebel who spent 10 years living underground took for the CPP is out in the open, declaring his belief in Christ with as much zeal as when he quoted Marx, Lenin and Mao.

The man, whose movement the military doubted and his former comrades assailed, can now speak with ease about his transformation, invoking God's mercy and forgiveness.

"My past still haunts me like an unsolved ghost," Communism said in a plea for sense for the book "This is my Story."

"In times of trial and discouragement, I remember the scripture, and in my woes, I find our Lord faithfully encouraging me to keep on," he said.

At one who found purpose in his struggles, Communism is more than willing to lead the congress that is expected to draw thousands to find their purpose and help overcome the spiritual emptiness, poverty, corruption, illiteracy and disease that beset every nation.

"I need to go after people to invite them to the rallies. Now, I'm mobilizing again, but for a higher cause, "he said.

For inquiries on tickets to the National Purpose Driven Congress, call 635-1290, 910-1256, or 412-4727 to 42.

For $35M, take a walk in space …

From page A1

tion—including NASA—for Andorra and Russian space officials are confident they can get the OK.

So Space Adventures' news release, Russia manned spaceflight chief Alexei Krasnov said space tourism could "potentially perform" in space work.

No comment from NASA

NASA, which has grudgingly accepted Russian-initiated space tourism, declined any comment on the proposal.

"They're going to be right outside the door for an hour-and-a-half [onboard in the ship," Anderson said. "Of course, they will have to communicate with them."

A space-walking tourist is "probably unwise," said one former astronaut, who spoke died during a February 1997 fire aboard the Russian Mir space station.

"Common sense tells you that you want professionals trained to the nth degree to do jobs like assess your jobs," said Jerry Linenger, who was the first American to train a Russian spacesuit in a spacewalk. "Do you want to get in an airplane with a 'professional' pilot who's only gotten a private pilot's license before?"

Linenger said if a spacewalking tourist does something wrong, that person could endanger the cosmonaut accompanying him. And if the cosmonauts has a problem, the rescuer would not be much help, he said.

Great thrills

But others among the more than 130 people who have spacewalked say it offers great thrills.

"It's the most phenomenal it is anyone," said Dan Barry, a former astronaut who lived on the station in 2001 and 2002 and made two spacewalks in the Russian suits.

"Just about anything that could go wrong, the other spacewalker would pull you back in," Barry said. "You really have to try hard to screw up."

But you can kill yourself if you do something wrong on a spacewalk, said former astronaut Jay Apt. A spacewalker could become disoriented and "float away or depressurize the spacesuit and die."

So beautiful

Former astronaut Tom Jones, who is no longer Adventures adviser, said the space experience is unrivaled, but the biggest risk is "doing something stupid inside because you are not on top of the situation."

"If you don't have that confidence level with that suit, that's when you can get seasick outside," he said.

In the end, he added, a spacewalk is worth the risk.

"It's such a beautiful experience physically," said Jones, author of the memoir "Sky Walking." "It brought tears to my eyes." AP

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Handheld Ultrasound: Entering Doctor's Offices, Small Modality, Big Impact on Health and Economy

Bernardita Calayan-Brion, MD, FPOGS,FPSUOG, FPCS

In these times of economic crisis when every Filipino's poor should be put into useful and worthwhile endeavor, the availability of new handheld ultrasound scanners in every doctor's clinic will greatly help the economy, as well as preserve the life and health of the people. With the exodus of doctors and nurses to the United States and other foreign countries, an officer of the determination and even the lack of an effective health care system will be felt amongst in the next few years.

These lightweight, handheld ultrasound devices have been available in the world market for the years and now exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Premiere Enterprises, are a breakthrough in assisting physical examinations at the bedside. Their use can help save on the economics manpower and resources.

Miniaturization makes its impact on the medical field.

These units are unique because they empower the physician to diagnose a variety of disorders during an initial patient encounter right in their clinics, instead of sending the patients to hospital radiology departments at higher cost. Proper referral can then commence immediately, saving time and money for the much needed evaluation and treatment.

This country's new obstetrician are often exposed to the technology during medical school and/or residency, where ultrasound is beginning to be as common as the stethoscope and been training with the use of ultrasound is now being undertaken. There is indeed a role for ultrasound in the medical curriculum if not yet incorporated.

Handheld ultrasound systems provide much importance to the health care industry every step across a wide array of patient care settings. Just intended for urgent situations as shown, they put the immediate visual information that improves diagnosis and treatment. They are useful and versatile tools for radiologists cardiologists and a growing contingent of other clinicians in and out of the hospital setting. Urologists, thoracic/vascular surgeons, neonatal neurologists, intensivists, gastroenterologists, cardiologists, surgeons, family doctors and even veterinarians have found the accessibility and usefulness of using them in their clinical practice. These handheld units will eventually become the doctors' modern day stethoscopes, and will soon replace them.

Its use in obstetrics also makes it the ideal scanner for Doppler and anthroscopy. Early in the pregnancy it is almost routine to use ultrasound to determine the size of the uterus or the fetus, to detect multiple or ectopic pregnancy, to confirm that the fetus is alive (or viable), or to confirm the due date in the presence of Viral trimester bleeding, it is important in the early diagnosis of ectopic pregnancies and molar pregnancies. Toward the middle of the pregnancy (at about 16-20 weeks), ultrasound may be used to confirm fetal growth, to reveal defects in the anatomy of the fetus, and to check the placenta. Toward the end of pregnancy, it may be used to evaluate fetal size, position, growth, or to check the placenta. The use of tape measure to as mount fundic height and estimate fetal weight is crude, misleading and inaccurate. Unlike x-rays, ultrasound waves are considered harmless radiation and does not pose a risk to the mother or the fetus. Even pregnancies by hormones as indispensable obstetric tool and plays an important role in the care of every pregnant woman.

Obstetric use of ultrasound is not addressed when there is unrelated for patient survival. In far-flung regions of the country where there is not scarcity of well-equipped hospitals and clinics, the use of these handheld units is practical and life saving. During the night, when hospitals/diagnostic centers are closed, obstetricians equipped with these units can easily diagnose and manage threatening conditions in patients who need emergency operation or surgery, such as ectopic pregnancy and placenta previa. Fetal malpresentation (i.e. breech, transverse lie) at the emergency labor and delivery rooms can be managed properly, with the appropriate surgical intervention, without sacrificing the lives of the mother and the baby, thus saving time and financial resources. Abortion cases with profuse vaginal bleeding can undergo ultrasound and curettage immediately, thus avoiding maternal death and morbidity due to severe blood loss.

In remote health centers, a quick scan of pregnant women in labor may identify patients who need to be brought to a hospital for delivery and management, avoiding maternal morbidity and mortality in home deliveries. The lightweight portable ultrasound unit offers the advantages of portability and access, ease of use and increased sensitivity and depending on circumstances, the examination can be done by a sonographer, a radiologist, or a physician trained to do so. It may prove to be necessary for every barangay health center to have a handheld unit and the examination performed by trained personnel.

In the emergency setting, paramedicians are the most common serious incidences is injury following blunt trauma, and are a common cause of preventable morbidity and mortality. Minimal personnel with handheld units responding to an injured patient in a hostile environment can quickly assess the victim and attempt to evaluate potentially life-threatening injuries without the benefit of standard imaging modalities, such as radiography. This increases the chances of early management and patient survival. They also serve the performance of thoracentesis.

Other procedures commonly performed in the emergency setting include: FAST (focused abdominal sonography for trauma) examinations to evaluate for intra-abdominal hemorrhage, and evaluation of gallbladder, kidney, liver, uterus, ovaries, and thoracic. They serve as alternative aids in performing transthoracic injuries in the needle aspiration biopsies. There are no special precautions recommended before an ultrasound examination.

How about contraindication? The portability of the system enhances its safety. Clinicians who have used them in their practice are uniformly enthusiastic about their safety and value. Portability can save money in the long run. A physician might work in many different clinics, so if each clinic requires its own ultrasound system, that's a large capital investment that can take while the physician is elsewhere. One handheld ultrasound unit can serve all clinics, rather than requiring investment and increasing cost efficiency. With a hand-carried system, it's battery-operated, therefore you can use it whether immediately and/or probably decrease the examination time. This can change a patient's general course.

I believe this technology offers a powerful diagnostic tool for use in every doctor's clinic, especially in remote villages and provinces and health settings where portable radiography is not available or practical. Ultrasound may mean an end to the classic stethoscope. They will help save and improve the lives of our countrymen.

For inquiries, contact 09175340493 or (02)254-4449. Dismar Enterprises will be holding another workshop on Off Frontal Ultrasound Scanning in the Handheld unit on July 30, 2006 at the showroom. Please text or call for exact office. Limited units available.

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'Leak will spoil RP nurses' chances'

THE LEAKAGE CONtroversy in last month's nursing licensure examination may have spoiled the Philippine bid to establish a test center in the country for Filipino nurses planning to practice in the United States.

According to Commissioner Rep. Joseph Santiago, the Professional Regulatory Commission, the Philippine Nursing Association and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration have been saying for years to persuade the US National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) to allow the holding of its licensure exams, the NCLEX, in Manila.

The NCLEX, or the National Council Licensure Examination, is the last step in the eligibility process for nurses aiming to work in the US.

It is the equivalent of the Philippines' own nursing licensure test, Santiago said.

At present, the NCLEX may be taken outside the US only in Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Japan, South Korea, Ukraine, Northern Marianas Islands, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the Virgin Islands.

"India and South Korea have NCLEX centers. This is one of the reasons why there [are] many graduates are finding it easier to pass the test and enter the US and avail of greener pastures," Santiago said.

The nursing graduates have to travel abroad to take the NCLEX, and this results in extra and corresponding disadvantages and pressures," he said.

Santiago said the NCSBN had been reluctant to allow the creation of the NCLEX in the Philippines "precisely because of weaknesses about the ability to protect the integrity of the exam here."

He said the NCLEX is administered by the NCSBN through the Pearson Professional Centers, an independent global network of testing facilities. Philip C. Rabena

Regional workers get P6-P20 pay hike

THE REGIONAL WAGE BOARDS IN ILOCOS, Cagayan Valley and Central Luzon have separately agreed to increase the daily wages of private sector workers after a series of consultations with workers and employers.

Workers in Ilocos are to get an increase of P11 to P20 a day, depending on the town or city where their employers hold business.

Board secretary Ricardo Belo said the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board also agreed to give carpenters in the regular wage the P15 daily cost-of-living allowance (COLA) granted to the workers last year under Wage Order No. 10.

As a result, the daily wage of workers in some areas of Ilocos could reach as much as P320 a day.

Belo said that in some areas like Pili and Naga City, in Camarines Sur and Daraga and Tabaco City, in Albay, the new wage hike will be implemented on a staggered basis.

The first 10 percent will be implemented in February 2007 and the other half in May 2007.

The regional wage board of the Calabarzon region has approved an average of P10.50 increase for workers in Laguna, Cavite, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon.

Under the new wage order to take effect in the first week of August, workers employed in the greatly metropolitan-composed of three cities and eight municipalities in Cavite, Laguna and Rizal provinces—are to get a P8 to P15 increase.

This will push the daily minimum wage in the region to between P247 and P272, compared to this current P239 to P264.

Workers in Batangas and Lucena towns in Cavite, San Pedro and Biñan in Laguna, and Calauan and Victoria in Rizal, will get a P10 increase.

These towns are considered "intermediate metropolitan areas" because of their proximity to Metro Manila.

Calabarzon is considered the most economically progressive region outside Metro Manila. It hosts most of the country's industrial estates and science parks.

Except for Lucena City, workers in Quezon province and other parts of the Calabarzon, classified as "resource-based areas" will only get a P5 to P8 a day increase, Dickson Tawao will get a P10.00 P14 increase.

Employers in Lucena will get an P18 wage hike.

The wage hike order also covers workers employed based on how much they produce, or the palyasan system.

The board allowed export companies that earn at least 30 percent of their profits from export sales to defer the implementation of the wage increase for not more than one year after the new wage order takes effect.

Private sector workers in Cagayan Valley, meanwhile, will get a P10 increase in their minimum daily wage, to take effect 15 days after the wage order is published in newspapers. Ability Q. Gabaldon and Marlon Ramos, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau; Estrelalio Gobis, Villamor Magno Jr. and Ben Moses Rivera, PIA Northern Luzon Bureau, and Benito Orejas, PIA Central Luzon Unit

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, July 23, 2006
16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Jeremiah 23:1-6
God the Shepherd
"Woe to the shepherds who mislead and scatter the sheep of my pasture!"

This is the message of Yahweh, God of Israel, to the shepherds in charge of my people. "You have scattered my sheep and driven them away instead of caring for them. Now I will deal with you because of your evil deeds.

"I will gather the remnant of my sheep from every land to which I have driven them and I will bring them back to the grasslands. They will be fruitful and increase in number. I will appoint shepherds who will take care of them. No longer will they fear or be terrified. Not one will be lost."

Yahweh further says, "The day is coming when I will raise up a king who is David's righteous successor. He will rule wisely and govern with justice and righteousness. How will he be a grandson yet when Judah will enjoy peace and Israel will live in safety. He will be called Yahweh our-justice!"

2nd Reading: Ephesians 2:13-18
Christ our peace
In Christ Jesus and by his blood, you who were once far off have come near.

For Christ is our peace, for who has made the two peoples one, destroying in his own flesh the wall... the hostil...which separated us. He abolished the Law with its commands and precepts. He made peace in uniting the two peoples to him, reconciling out of the two one New Man. He destroyed hostility and reconciled us both to God through the cross, making the two one body.

He came to proclaim peace; peace to you who were far off, peace to the Jews who were near. Through him we—the two peoples...approach the Father in one Spirit.

Gospel: Mark 6:30-34
He grieved them
The apostles returned and reported to Jesus all they had done and taught. Then he said to them, "Go off by yourselves to a secret place and have some rest." For there were so many people coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a secluded area by themselves.

But people saw them leaving and many could guess where they were going. So, from all the towns they hurried over land, arriving ahead of them.

So Jesus went ashore to see a large crowd, and he had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began a long teaching session with them.

Commentary:
...to catch men into the fold shepherds of Israel who are waiting for the people they are supposed to protect, lead and serve. They were in the habit, but where were they when evil spirits and lawless the flock and while with them so that they do not know her or seek, and none will go missing. There will be a righteous Shoot and his name will be justice.

...Jesus to our leaders. In him we have been brought back home. He is peace, reconciling us to God and one another, and in the Spirit we are set free to the Father to have of Jesus to day brings us to an end of the two plans and even with us. Jesus and his disciples have in a boat but people are so desperate for this seeking place of refuge they find in Jesus what they set them off in their vicinity. Jesus is the good shepherd who cares for his people. He goes to the crowd. With the disciples there are learned such gifts and special times with them who are weak in need?

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PROMENADE

SAMSUNG

Canadian mine firm accused of rights violations

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BALAMBAN, DTT —An embattled group has accused Canadian-based Toronto Ventures Inc. (TVI) of committing human rights violations under the guise of mining concessions it operates in the Judasanon Island ancestral domain in Zamboanga del Norte.

The Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) alleged that TVI has been in security force is armed a couple and dodayo here lately turned to the Subanon based opposed to mining activities in Canaman village in Siocon.

A TVI official has denied the allegations.

The ATM, a coalition of environment and people's organizations uniting a countrywide campaign to stop mining, claimed that on June 28, TVI security forces demolished a house owned by Manolito and Lilay Galvez. The couple reportedly suffered injuries when they resisted.

ATM said the couple was "beaten up and tasered" by TVI security forces, when villagers identified as being members of the Special Citizen Armed Auxiliaries (SCAA).

ATM also accused TVI of damaging the farmlands in the mining company's concession area and threatening to destroy the land of other farmers refusing to leave the area.

"We have taken note of different human rights violations of mining companies [against] noncombatant and data in the latest of these. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the indigenous people are being treated and the government's apathetic stance on disgusting landmark case," ATM national coordinator Jaybee Garganera said in a statement.

Nicky Dimacalangan, the TVI public affairs director, said the ATM allegations were "unsound" and "blatant lies."

Dimacalangan said the military did provide security for the mining firm but that soldiers were not involved in the demolition.

Demolition

He said it was the Siocon Subanon Association Inc. (SSAI), led by Timuay Bobbie Gonzales, which demolished the house of the Galvez couple inside the TVI mining concession area in Canaman.

"It was the indigenous people themselves led by Gonzales who took the initiative to dismantle the shanty after years of stupid Galvez stuffs. The couple who demanded P1.5 million compensation from TVI and refused TVI's offer of P125,000," Dimacalangan told The Inquirer.

He said Gonzales was a member of the Subanon council of elders.

Based on a mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) it signed with the government, TVI was given a mining concession of 300 hectares within the 8,222-ha Subanon ancestral domain in Canaman where small-scale miners have been extracting gold since the 1980s.

According to Dimacalangan, when TVI started operations in mid-2004, the company negotiated with around 250 small-scale miners to relocate. He said TVI even offered them "alternative employment."

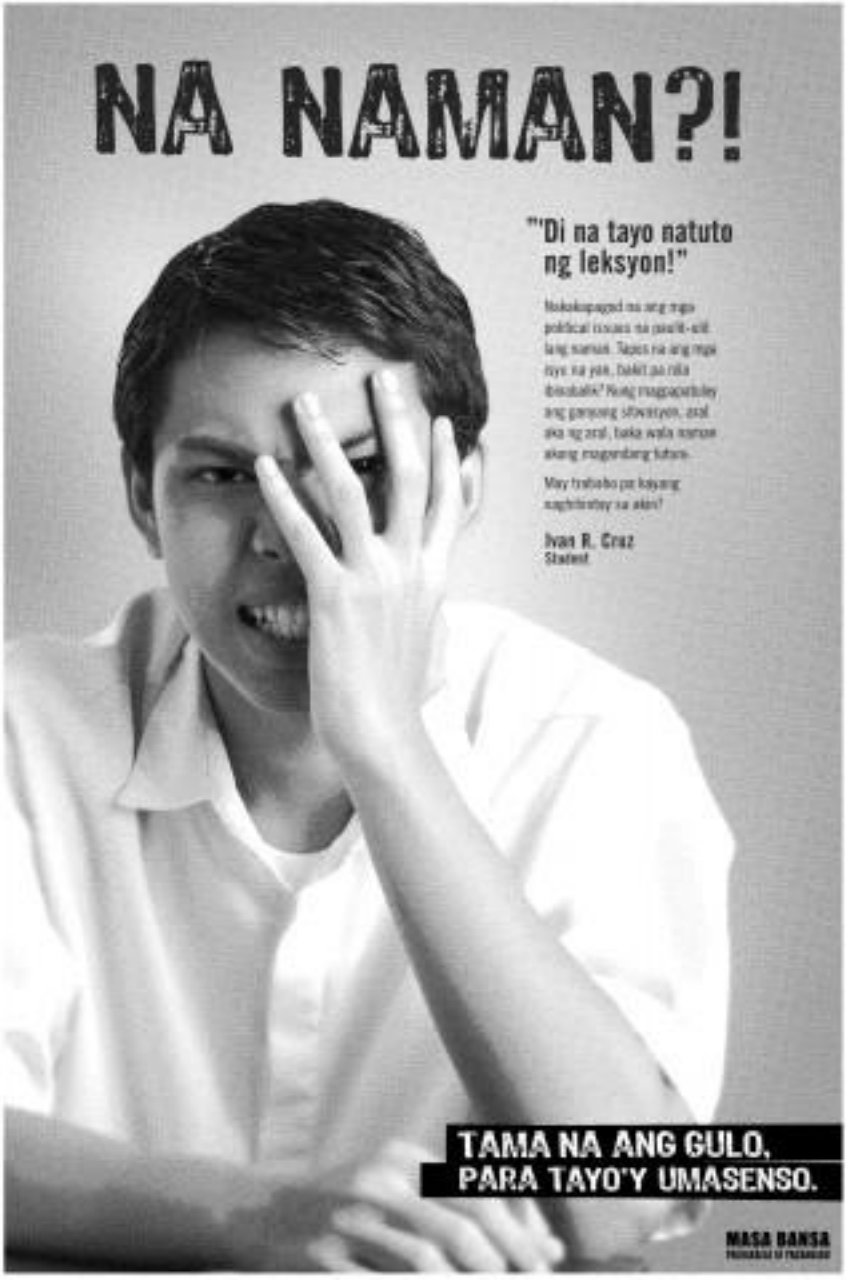
Holdover group

Dimacalangan said the Galvez couple belonged to a holdover group of small-scale miners which continues to operate in the TVI mining concession area.

He said the Galvez were not members of the Subanon farmer community.

On the issue of human rights violations, Dimacalangan said TVI had talked the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to investigate the demolition.

"We feel that the independent investigations will prove both that the indigenous leaders acted within their rights and that the security personnel deployed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines did nothing improper when they intervened to prevent any injury on both sides," a TVI statement said. —Richard P. Bagasin, PDI Mindanao bureau



Cops, militants vow peaceful Sona rallies

By Leigo A. del Puerto

MILITANT GROUPS and police agreed yesterday to ensure that protest actions would be peaceful during President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address tomorrow.

After a breakfast meeting, both sides exercised optimistic that their respective positions had been understood. Everyone agreed to respect the people's right to stage peaceful rallies.

Both sides agreed that one side of Commonwealth Avenue would be allotted for the protesters and the other side for commuters and motorists, Quezon said.

During the meeting, militant urged the police to identify officials that would police their ranks.

Reyes and Bayan are granted a permit and would follow what was stated on it, Quezon said.

"Bahala na sila sa kanilang hanay. Kung may mga tao na sa kanilang hanay na hindi sumusunod sa napagkasunduan, sila na ang bahala sa kanila," he said.

The permit allows militants to stage demonstration at the Iver Commonwealth area.

Asked if they would try to get near the Batasang Pambansa, where the President will deliver her fourth Sona, Reyes said: "What is important is we can match our bold programs. We will keep our mind to what is stated in our permit is what we will do."

Encouraged by the talks, Quezon told the Inquirer that the police might withdraw the force to be deployed in the capital.

Euphoric

"I'm totally euphoric," National Capital Region Police Office Director Hidilyn Quezon said. "I'm very happy that even before the Sona, there is already a meeting of the minds and we are driven by economic motives to ensure peaceful Sona."

Quezon said he did not expect violent rallies on Monday.

Among those who attended the breakfast meeting at the Bale Hotel in Quezon City were Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bayan Muntinlupa; Bayan Magnito of the Pamalo ng Manggagawa; and Lingayo Alcuan of the Partisan ng Manggagawa Pilipino.

Right to protest

"The talks were good," said Magtubo. "They respect our right to protest, and we also respect their right to do their job. If everybody does what is agreed upon... we don't think anything untoward will take place."

Reyes also agreed that one side of Commonwealth Avenue would be allotted for the protesters and the other side for commuters and motorists, Quezon said.

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Encouraged by the talks, Quezon told the Inquirer that the police might withdraw the force to be deployed in the capital.

10,000 cops

"I might want to down to maybe about 10,000 (cops and soldiers), with 7,000 directly involved in traffic and security at the Batasan," he said.

Police initially planned to fortify the capital with 16,000 personnel and reports that communist rebels planned to sneak into Metro Manila to use rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and following the release of explosives and blueprints of Batasan from Magdalo-led soldiers.

But Reyes said the group still feared the police would use the supposed Boy Pesudo's Army plot to crack down on demonstrators.

Reyes also feared the police would use actions from the countryside from joining the Sona rallies.

Quezon, however, assured him that protesters from the provinces would be allowed to proceed to the capital, but there would be checkpoints to ensure no weapons could be smuggled through.

Quezon also assured his men against bringing firearms in the rallies.

"NO HUM." Lawyer Rona Ballano of the Commission on Human Rights (left) listens policemen on the rights of protesters in a seminar at Camp Karingal in Quezon City ahead of President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address tomorrow. The cops appear to have heard it all before. JOAN BONDOC

Militant solons to boycott Sona

By Philip C. Tubeza

SIX PARTYLIST REPRESENTATIVES will BOYCOTT President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address tomorrow to protest the killing of leftist activists and the filing of rebellion charges against them.

Reelected immigrants party-list Rep. Crispin "Ito Bel" Beltran will rather instead an alternative Sona where he opposes with the Batasan 5 before the Makati Regional Trial Court to answer the consolidated rebellion case against them.

"We will boycott the Arroyo's Sona because we believe she has lost all moral ascendancy to govern. She has no power but has left her to destroy almost all institutions through massive electoral fraud, corruption, bribery, black propaganda, political persecution and terrorism," they said in a joint statement.

The Batasan 5 refers to the militant lawmakers—Bayan Partylist Minority Leader Satur C. Ocampo, Bayan Muna Rep. Rafael V. Mariano and Teddy Casiño, Gabriela Rep. Liza L. Maza and Anakpawis Rep. Rafael V. Mariano—who camped out at the House building for about three months to avoid arrest after being implicated in the attempted coup last February.

The group will also make the opening of the third regular session of the 12th Congress tomorrow as they will absent themselves.

Another legislator planning to boycott the Sona, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., said that Mr Arroyo's badly eroded credibility would make it difficult for the public to distinguish between the truth and lies in her Sona.

Pimentel said the President had acquired the reputation of a leader whose proclamations conflicted with her administration's actions, "as shown by the government's handling of graft and corruption, human rights violations, massive poverty, spreading unrest, the communist and Muslim insurgencies, and the power crisis."

"The problem with the President is she has no more credibility. So whatever she says, the people will think she is lying and they will not believe her," he said in a statement.

"We have a President who says one thing and does another," he added.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL WHO CARE FOR THE NURSING PROFESSION IN THE PHILIPPINES

WE, the administrators, faculty members, alumni and students of the University of Santo Tomas College of Nursing, express our grave concern over the leakage in the recent Philippine Nursing Licensure Examination and the subsequent leader of the Professional Regulation Commission in releasing the results without consulting parties concerned.

This action raises more doubts not only on the integrity of our Licensure Examination but also on the quality of our country's nursing graduates. More specifically, this action tarnishes the image of all the nursing graduates who took the Licensure Examination this year.

We are fully aware that the Professional Regulation Commission, in its resolution dated July 12, invalidated the twenty-five questions in Test 02 (Medical Surgical Nursing) as well as all questions in Test 5 (Psychiatric Nursing). The said two subject areas of the nursing curriculum: Medical Surgical Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing. These subjects are major areas of comprehension of the profession.

Consequently, the said action of the Commission appears the law (pause Section 14 of Article VII of Republic Act 9173 quoted herewith:

> Scope of Examination. "The scope of examination for the practice of nursing in the Philippines shall be determined by the Board. The Board shall take into consideration the objectives of the nursing curriculum, the **broad areas of nursing**, and other related disciplines and competencies in determining the subjects of examination."

Since their competencies in the aforementioned areas were not considered, examinees who have "passed" the June 2006 Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination have not necessarily proven their ability to provide safe and quality care to their future patients. Their competence is under a cloud of doubt. The Supreme Court of the Philippines (G.R. 118621) en banc Singzon, and echoed in a number of subsequent decisions that it is the duty of the State "to ensure that the medical profession is not infiltrated by incompetents to whom patients may unwarily entrust their lives and health," and the government does this taking of patients' life and limb under the care of nurses with doubtful competence?

In addition, we have received information from our graduates that despite the pronouncement of the Professional Regulation Commission that Test 2 was invalidated, they were given a score in the said test. This action is a direct violation of Section 15, Article 2 of RA 9173:

> Ratings. – In order to pass the examinations, an examinee must obtain a general average of at least seventy-five percent (75%) with a rating of not below sixty percent (60%) in any subject. An examinee who obtains an average rating of seventy-five (75%) or higher but fails in a rating below sixty percent (60%) in any subject, must take the examination again but only in the subject or subjects where he/she a rated below sixty percent (60%). In order to pass the succeeding examination, an examinee must obtain a rating of at least seventy-five percent (75%) in the subject or subjects repeated.

Moreover, in Test 02, there is no absolute certainty whether only 25 questions were indeed tossed out. How did the invalidating body come to the conclusion that these were the only items taken out? Hence, to that it from delegation of administrative, it is incumbent upon the Professional Regulation Commission to explain to the public the basis of computation of grades of the examinees. Otherwise, Truth and science demand that a more credible and reasonable explanation be given to its concerned actions.

In view of the above circumstances, we **CALL ON THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION TO SUSPEND THE RELEASE OF OATH TAKING WHILE THE RESULTS OF A FULL-SCALE AND INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION ARE STILL PENDING.**

WE CALL ON THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION AND THE BOARD OF NURSING TO IMMEDIATELY RESOLVE THE ISSUES RAISED ABOVE.

We assured concerned parents and candidates for licensure that we do not wish to prolong your inconvenience and anxiety. We are all victims of a decision by the Professional Regulation Commission that clouds, rather than sheds light, on this disgraceful incident that happened in the recent June 2006 board examination. We wish to reiterate our de rere duties to the profession in a process that is free from insidious and suspicion.

SUSAN N. HAMADILLA
Assistant Dean
College of Nursing, UST

THELMA ABEJARDO
Treasurer
UST Nursing Alumni Association

IRENE M. TROLE
President, Faculty Association of the College of Nursing, UST

ALFREDO HERRERA
PRO, Nursing Student Council
UST

WE ARE FOR CLEAR AND HONEST LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS!

Abat drew most cheers at Army turnover rites

By Dona Pazaibigan

FORMER ARMY CHIEF AND self-professed "transition president" Fortunato Abat commanded the biggest applause during the turnover of the reins during the Philippine Army turnover ceremonies at Fort Bonifacio yesterday.

Abat, who is also a former defense secretary, received applause from a surprised audience when his presence was announced by the outgoing Army chief and newly-sworn-in Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

"May I acknowledge the former Army commanding generals. May I ask you to rise, General Abat?" Esperon said as he acknowledged the presence of 4Dr. retired generals.

The 61-year-old drew stood up and waved to the audience, many of whom apparently did not realize that the controversial general was in their midst.

When his turn came to speak, newly installed Army Chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino read through a long list of his former commanders and mentors and acknowledged former Army chiefs in the audience, but did not mention Abat.

In their speeches, Esperon and Tolentino stressed that soldiers must watch the military would remain loyal to the chain of command.

If Abat felt affected to, he did not give any sign of it. He did not show up at the cocktails following the ceremonies.

Abat openly incited rebellion charges when he proclaimed a revolutionary transition government and declared himself President on Dec. 13, 2005, in wakes of a coup d'etat report.

He held forth for 15 hours at the Club Filipino in Greenhills in San Juan protest arrested him and other members of his transition Cabinet. They were then charged with inciting to sedition but were not jailed.

In the months leading up to his arrest, Abat had been calling on the military and the police to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo and "protect the sovereign right of the people."

Tolentino later told reporters he did not put meaning to Abat's presence at the Army turnover rites.

"It means he still loves the Army. He used to be our Army commander," said Tolentino, who is reported to have issued "shoot-to-kill" orders late January against anyone planning to rebel or withdraw his constitutional rights.

According to Army insiders, Abat attends Army turnover ceremonies though he missed the last one his Esperon in August 2005.

SKYNET TRAVEL CORPORATION

NCLEX

Sona: High-tech show, parade of champs

By Gil C. Cabacungan

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO is putting bells and whistles on her State of the Nation Address tomorrow, aiming to transform the solemn affair into a cutting-edge presentation and a parade of Filipino champions for this" led by boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao.

"The Sona will be high-tech and will be supported by champions. It will not be just a simple speech by the President, it will be interactive," Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor told a press briefing yesterday.

"The people out-number and not just listen to what she will say," Defensor said.

Special guests

Aside from a presentation spruced up with the latest technological glamour, the President's sixth Sona before the joint chambers of Congress will be "green life" by the appearance of Pacquiao, Miss Interna-

tional Precious Lara Quigaman, some of the the gold medalists in the last Southeast Asian Games, and the Filipino recipients of Mt. Everest.

The President's special guests were originally hailed as "Champions for Life," a kind of hall of fame for athletes, boxing queens and other achievers outside of the arts and sciences which the President created through Executive Order No. 540 issued last month.

Defensor defended the move to the land of publicity seen in the Sona, arguing that the "true manifestation of a growing economy is the achievements of our people."

"The Sona is about the nation and the pride of the Filipino people. The people's champions are our pride and we are a thing to present them in this year's Sona," he said.

Pride of the state

Defensor said that superpower on the Chinese variety showcases the pride of the state by promoting world-class athletes and performers.

"My hope to do the same by showing off our world-class individuals. I don't see anything wrong in that," he said.

Debate over figures

Defensor said the President took a direct hand in her 2006 Sona, typing the draft of her speech on her laptop, with all Cabinet secretaries on call for any quarrel over figures. "It is, yesterday

THE SIMPLE BUT DRAMATIC cutaway ballot to be Barangay Pandacaan gets all approval signs in the campaign for the State of the Nation Address to be delivered by President Arroyo on Monday before a joint session of Congress. (PHOTO/INQ)

GMA is 'Superman' on economy, but not . . .

Front page A1

her dedication to her job, said Chua.

He cited the President's "killer schedule" that had forced her to be confined for one night in the hospital due to work-related stress.

Jesus Arroyo of the Federation of Philippine Industries said that comparing the last seven or eight months between the Estrada and Arroyo administrations was like night and day.

"Pantasan ito noong pitong taon silang ito, had the economy the focal point of her State of the Administration to the last five years," said Arroyo.

Arroyo admitted that while the President fell short in the political department, he did not consider that a failure for which she alone had to bear responsibility.

It takes two to tango

"It takes two to tango. If the other party does not want to make peace, all the President can do is say," said Arroyo. "We all want the country to be one big happy family but you can't blame the President if we are not."

Mr. Arroyo's economic advisor, Rey Jaspe Estrella of Alliance Global Group Inc. and Chairman of Alliance Select Foods International, said the government's policies is crucial for its continued access to foreign creditors, based on a future notion of positive developments on the economic front.

Credit rating agencies like Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch Ratings have generally given the Arroyo administration a thumbs-up for its fiscal policies although some of foreign president have made them hesitant to endorse the country more on bond actually.

Mr. Arroyo's desire to narrow the scope of the investigation has made his administration undertake a slew of questionable policies—from changing the definition of semi-conductors to computer peripherals to the government's unilateral decision to single-digit levels, to letting countercoal mines compete.

IT policy

Business groups, however, that his policy favoring the development of the information technology communications technology (ICT) sector is one of the most productive employment measures.

"We are on track to create having one million jobs in the ICT sector by 2010," said Mitch Leeds, executive director of Business Processes Association of the Philippines.

BPAP brings together the country's biggest call center and business process outsourcing firms. It has aggressively pushed for more support for the $13.5 billion a year industry which presently employs about 120,000 Filipinos. (See photo on Page A16)

Language training

"The government has even begun to give more emphasis to English-language training after we lobbied for that last year," Leeds told.

Leeds noted that the call center industry had also benefited from Mr. Arroyo's drive to decentralize economic activity.

"Already we have four [call center] players in Batangas City, we have another two are, ring up in Iloilo, another two in Bacolod, and one in Tacloban," he said, on top of the call centers that are already operating in Cebu City and Davao City.

Disconnect in Mindanao

As in past years, discontent was highest in Mindanao where administration spending and development continues to lag from the rest of the country.

"Mindanao is developing only because of Gen Macapagal-Arroyo," said Bishop Vicente Cenzon, a businessman based in General Santos City. "If you look at the infrastructure [spending] over the last five years, it's not right," he said, noting that it is disproportionate to Mindanao's role as the country's "food basket."

"They haven't even built the farm-to-market roads that they promised," he added.

He pointed to the proliferation of so-called "skyriders" or habal-habal—motorcycles with wooden planks that allow up to 10 riders to be accommodated—as evidence of the many ruins of Mindanao's transport infrastructure.

Not superwoman

One of the President's closest Cabinet allies before former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman, strongly disagreed with the seemingly general consensus that the President was a superwoman in economics.

Soliman said that while the positive economic data—from interest rates to the foreign exchange rate to the stock market indices—showed a rosy picture of the economy, there was hardly anything for the average Filipino to cheer about.

Banks prefer to invest in treasury bills than lend to Juan de la Cruz. The strong peso means less purchasing power for recipients of remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

And a faltering oracles who calls himself. Amid, "Life was already difficult before. It has become more difficult now." Speaking in Tagalog, the vendor in Makati City did not think that consumer prices had stabilized as the government claimed.

Soliman said that while the 4 kilo of large-scaled Globe's goal to cost him P70. It now costs P80,—an inflation rate of 14 percent, almost double that of official statistics. At the same time, since rates have prevented him from raising prices, keeping the price of each child's at P2.50 when it should already be P3, a spokesperson said.

The fight margin have forced many of his poor out of business, he said, and have garbage for raging.

Elderly cart, soiled shirt

Indeed, Ariel's elderly fellow cart and soiled shirt give no indication that the country's several economic growth—with the gross domestic product growing at its fastest pace in a decade—has trickled down to the poorest of the poor.

"How can you say we are doing well when good macroeconomic figures don't translate to good microeconomic figures?" Soliman asked.

Huge gap

Soliman believed that the President's failure to bridge the benefits of her fiscal reform programs in the past years deserves the measure of how the country for her standing in the political arena.

"The Filipinos see a huge gap between what the President promises in her speeches on economy on the verge of a takeoff and the reality in the everyday lives of common Filipinos chose to survive—since Duterte assumes power," Soliman said.

The perceived gap, which too, Manuel A. Roxas II dubbed the "economic disconnect," has led the public and her political foes, including ousted President Joseph Estrada's loyalists, to question her authority to get to her side, to think twice before making a deal with her.

"I used to be close to her because I truly believed then that she was sincere and truly interested in helping the Filipinos. But I guess she does not have the ability to communicate her goals with sincerity to the public," Estrada said.

Patronage politics

Even the President's rallying call to vote hard, the old system of patronage politics should not be taken at face value.

"It is in Charter change that she is at her most traditional as a politician," said Soliman, citing the Gandhian plan in a new Constitution which would allow her to appoint 25 to 30 more representatives on top of the congressmen, senators and Cabinet officials that would be sitting in the unicameral body.

"This transitional body can perpetuate itself in power because it is the only one that can decide when elections will be held," said Soliman.

Interest bloc

"If you look at all her Sonas, all her accomplishments are impressive in the beginning but none of the promises have been fulfilled in their fullness. To make a promise, you are going to ring an interest bloc and that is not willing to do that for the entire the establishment order."

Soliman contrasted that it would take some time before the State of the Road reforms would reach the ordinary Filipinos because of the gridlocks in the economy that it dominated by a few rich families.

Soliman said that was the reason the President had made a huge push to focus on boosting the wealth in the second half of her administration by increasing spending on infrastructure and social services in the national budget while laser-targeting subsidies in economic activities that have the most impact on the poor such as food, health care and housing.

Easier the next time around

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor expressed confidence that it would be easier for the President to achieve her political objectives the next few years compared to the first few years.

"In the first few years, the President had always acted like she was under siege, like life, law terms, her self-respect was always under threat. But now, after the opposition has thrown everything at her including the kitchen sink, the people already realizing the economic benefits from her reforms, and with a friendly ally leading the house, the President would be in a better position to gain the least of the pressure, reconcile with her political foes, and forge a power pact with rebels," said Defensor.

More applause

As what clues he expect from the President's Sona appearance on Monday, July 24?, "We expect more clapping from the audience, definitely much louder than last year."

Marines still restive...

Front page A1

On Friday a day after the discoveries announced, Lt. Col. Lucmalio Bacnon and Lt. Col. Antonio Rebot quit their posts as deputy commandants for operations (MCO) and for plans and programs (MCP), respectively.

Two mid-placed marines stepforward the resignations and said there were connected to the failed plot by elite troops from the Scout Rangers, the Marines and the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But while one source told Bacnon and Rebot had resigned in protest of the upcoming coup d'etat, the other said the action was based on "coincidence."

According to reports, the two were declared their resignations after a morning meeting Marine officers at their fort Gonzalez headquarters during the farewell ceremony for the new AFP chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Jr.

Michael Defensor, Mr. Arroyo's chief of staff, yesterday denied that Rebot and Bacnon had quit in protest of Esperon's appointment.

"I talked with one of them because he is a close friend of mine, and he denied resigning because of Esperon," Defensor said without naming the officer.

Esperon could not be found soonest to press investigators lineup to look into the culpability of military men implicated in the purported Feb. 24 plot.

In black and white

Navy Flag Officer in Command Mateo Mayuga remains the trial to sidestep the issue, saying he had not seen the actual resignation letters.

"There are reports, but ... if they are going to resign, it should be in black and white. So if no one, there's none," he said.

But later Mayuga indicated that he was made aware of groups among the Marines in connection with the coup communications with the coup communications.

"There are some gripes, but I've told him to put it in black and white," Mayuga said.

But there is the another unit of the 9,000-strong Marine Corps which is famous for Bicutan. "The Pink Thirteen," the Marines.

The Marines would also not confirm the resignations.

But on Friday, Arroyo said he had put on sentries from Nograles headquarters, the order to remove all 15 Marine officers implicated in the supposed plot.

The AFP inspector general, Rear adm. Emilio Lopez, whose fact-finding board had recommended both the relief and court-martial of 22 Scout Rangers and 38 Marine officers for the purported plot, said such officers who had broke in their oath of loyalty to the chain of command had no place to be military.

'They will not be missed'

"What is 46 officers against 17,000 in the AFP's three corps? They will not be missed," Lopez said yesterday.

On Thursday, Lopez said the relief order should "take effect immediately."

The Marine had said all 38 front Ranger officers were relieved of their posts.

According to an Inquirer source, Bacnon was among a group of about 20 Marine officers who quit their posts early in the week but only Bacnon and Rebot were elected by their superiors.

The source said the resignations came "in the aftermath" of the Feb. 24 standoff at the Marine headquarters where Col. Ariel Querubin surrendered his troops after a failed power grab order of the three Marine commanders, Mai. Gen. Renato Miranda.

Bacnon and Querubin are neighbor of the vaunted Medal of Valor, the military's highest combat medal, for their bravery in combat against extremist groups in Mindanao.

Rebot, on the other hand, was popularly known "demobilized" after Alfonso named him acting Marine chief of staff on June 15, replacing Col. Orlando de Leon who had quit his post purportedly in disgust over the "politicized" AFP.

A source said Alfonso assigned Rebot in an "acting capacity" because the position had been "promised" to another officer who was then on an education grant in Japan.

Bulay was also seen as "unpaid" because of his closeness to Querubin, another source said.

1987 coup attempt

A 1992 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, Rebot was among the young officers who joined the December 1989 coup attempt against the Aquino administration.

The bloody coup attempt was led by Querubin and Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Ino, the ranked commander of the Scout Rangers, under the Young Officers Union banner.

Despite the death and destruction they had caused, all AFP rebel groups were granted amnesty in 1990, and the likes of Ino, Querubin and Rebot reconnected with military careers.

Patriot, a member of PMA Class 1987, has been categorized of the "solid" group of young corps of junior officers who mounted the 2003 Oakwood mutiny. But he was never charged.

Recommendation

The eight-member fact-finding board led by Navy Admiral Lopez has recommended that officers linked to previous coup plots not be given crucial command posts.

But, Genevose Sarigo appointed all the recommendations made by the panel, which named 38 officers led by Alfonso as AFP chief of staff on July 11.

Apart from the scout rangers, the 46 Scout Rangers and Marine officers will also face summary dismissal proceedings before the Philippine Military Academy Board, along with 125 Scout Rangers enlisted personnel who had joined the purported coup plot.

Ltn. Querubin and Miranda have been identified as ranksaded in the list.

The post were not identified. But a look of the draft Lopez report named Pascua and Rebot as among those recommended for court-martial.

Findings

According to the Lopez board's findings, Lts. Querubin and Miranda planned to lead troops on a march to Nido on Feb. 24 and withdraw support from the President in order to install a transitional junta.

The investigators said the Feb. 24 standoff prompted by Alfonso's relief was part of the supposed plot. The standoff lasted for hours until Querubin was persuaded again by Alfonso and the release of the senior officers to their followers.

Two days later, Querubin was relieved as commander of the 1st Marine Brigade based in Lumot del Sur.

Miranda remains "in the system."

Standoff

But at the Nido anniversary on June 23, Sibayan told reporters that Lt. Col. Artellero Sagmaolina, reportedly one of those ordered by court-martial, had not been investigated over the purported plot.

Sibayan said there "There are no procedural rule as the separation Unit (MPU) is concerned."

He even led the standoff of Marine officers, chief of the 2nd Marines Battalion that boarded a flight for Tawi-tawi. (With reports from By Jimmen and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.)

Churches offer prayers for Pinoys' safety

AS THE PHILIPPINES SCRAMBLES to rescue Filipino workers trapped in Lebanon, the Roman Catholic Church will be offering prayers for their safety today.

In the Manila Archdiocese, a special prayer for peace in the Holy Land as well as the entire Middle East, will be integrated in all Masses starting today.

The full text of the special prayers is as follows:

"We pray for peace in the Middle East, especially in the Holy Land and Lebanon. May the governments in war with each other come to realize that nobody wins in war and that peace is the only way to promote community of humankind.

"We pray for those who are suffering and grieving because of the conflict of powers in the Holy Land and Lebanon, that they may continue to hold on to the power of love and peace rather than the destruction of hatred and vengeance."

Also, a special Mass for the OFWs in Lebanon and Israel is to be said at the Nuestra Señora de Guia Cathedral Church at 5 p.m. today by the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants.

A candle lighting activity will be held after the Mass. Arnaine Sering

AMERICAN EVACUEES are helped to embark on the USS Trenton off southern Beirut en route to Cyprus. Thousands of foreigners huddled in transit centers, weary but relieved to governments around the world ramped up a mass evacuation. AFP

Forces of Israel, Hezbollah, Lebanon

FULLSPEED IS A SUMMARY OF the military strengths of Israel, Lebanon and the Hezbollah, according to experts' estimates, notably the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the defense group Jane's:

ISRAEL: Troop strength: 168,000, made up of 125,000 army, 35,000 air force, 8,000 navy. Also 408,000 reservists.

Equipment: 3,500 tanks, 470 warplanes, 15 warships, 3 submarines, 200 nuclear warheads, Patriot missiles.

LEBANON: Troop strength: 72,150 including conscripts. However, most are mere police officers rather than soldiers. 1,140 in the air force, 1,000 in the navy.

Equipment: 310 tanks, mostly old Soviet T-54s and T-55s, and 24 helicopters.

HEZBOLLAH: Strength: 600 to 1,000 fighters, 3,000 to 5,000 available. 10,000 reservists.

Equipment: 14,000 to 15,000 rockets. Rockets include: Katyusha, with a range of 20 km., 30 km (40 km), Fajr-3 (75 km), supplied by Iran.

Missiles: Perhaps around 24 supplied by Iran. AFP

RUSSIA & SCANDINAVIA
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OFWs told: Pack up and go

Boxing up #1

Ginarta said there were not too many Filipinos in the northern part of Lebanon as most of them were concentrated in the east.

Ginarta, tasked to oversee the evacuation plans, said the government was focused on how to effect a full evacuation after Israeli airplanes "dropped leaflets in Southern Lebanon advising the people to get out of the area because they are coming."

"They are planning to use precision bombs to knock down vital installations," Ginarta said in a phone interview with Malacañang reporters.

There target is just one-third of Lebanon and is just 43 kms away from Beirut."

Alert level 4

DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuncion said a number of OFWs had gone to the Philippine Embassy in Beirut but only to register and not to leave when it is now time if they had to evacuate need. Thus, they returned to their employers.

The DFA raised the alert status in the evacuation level 4 as Israeli forces threatened more destruction of targets in Lebanon after days of aerial bombardments.

"They should just pack up and go," Asuncion stressed, referring to the OFWs in southern Lebanon covered by Alert Level 4.

Under level 4, "they have no more choice" but to rush to an evacuation site for evacuated pick-up...either to the embassy itself or to the Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal parish run by a Filipino priest, Asuncion said.

While conditions seemed to have worsened for Filipinos trapped in Lebanon, guidelines bounded the first batch of 204 evacuees who had fled Beirut by bus to Damascus, Syria, and who were supposed to have arrived in Manila yesterday.

Flight delayed

The Emirates Airlines flight that was chartered to fly them to the Philippines at around 1 p.m. yesterday was, "facilities delayed" because of technical problems in the aircraft, Asuncion said.

Late last night, DFA officials said a new but smaller plane had been chartered from Airlink Inc. to ferry home the OFWs and that the plane was expected to arrive at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City today at noon.

The plane was carrying 229 OFWs and three infants, Asuncion said.

As of early last night (Manila time), a new plane for buses evacuees for the homebound OFWs but their flight schedule was still being cleared, he said.

"I have instructed the DFA to watch up our alert status to the highest level in the face of unrelenting violence and strife," Ms. Arroyo said in a statement. "To the fullest extent that this government can deliver, we shall take every Filipino in Lebanon out of harm's way."

Banks, groceries open

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said he expected the alert level for the stranded OFWs to be raised also to 4 in the rest of Lebanon in the coming days.

Ginarta, who was in Beirut, said life appeared normal in the capital city which was only the alert level remained at 3.

"The banks and groceries are still open and traffic is still heavy here," Ginarta said.

Ginarta estimated that 90 to 95 percent of the 30,000 Filipinos in Lebanon are in Beirut with the remaining five percent scattered in other areas.

Ginarta said the number of registered evacuees is over 500 and that the government was processing their papers for their return to Manila.

Temporary relocation

But Ginarta said the government was already preparing for the evacuation of all Filipinos from central and northern Lebanon area, especially if the Israeli army marched deeper in to Lebanon.

"This is the reason why I am telling this is temporary relocation site in the northernmost part of Lebanon at the border of Syria so that it would be easier to get them when necessary," Ginarta said.

Ginarta said the seven-case contacts were to shift all Filipinos out of Lebanon and bring them all back to Manila.

"We have no problem with the funding, our problem is in logistics. It's really difficult to get planes here from one destination to another," he said.

In her statement, the President said the government had acted that considered all scenarios and options in the areas of evacuation, evacuation and coordinated operations with other countries.

OFW's hotline

"I have a hotline with our crisis managers on the ground," she said, referring to Ginarta's team. "The government will bring all resources available to bear upon the situation as our changes our action blueprint to include all possible safe contingencies, means of egress and means of transport."

Under the alert level 3 existing in other areas in Lebanon, Filipinos are instructed to relocate to a pre-designated safe haven in their locality.

Asuncion would not immediately provide details when asked whether OFWs in Metro had evacuation centers where they could immediately run to.

But this much Asuncion could say: "Whatever the distance between Metro and Beirut, the embassy has to pluck them out of there."

Advice to those trapped

Benigno undersecretary Imelda Cuaspo said OFWs coming from southern Lebanon should try to make it to Beirut where the Philippine government is.

He said they could make their trip safer by going with their employers who were also fleeing, or by contacting the embassy or the designated Filipino "coordinator" in their area as to where they could be picked up.

Precision bombing

Vice President Noli de Castro, speaking on his weekly radio program, said that the OFWs who were mostly coming from the areas in south of Tyre and Sidon in southern Lebanon, had been instructed to board embassy travel buses and proceed to the Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Church in Beirut and await evacuation to Damascus, Syria.

He said that in parts of Lebanon where alert level 3 was in place, the danger was not imminent because of "specific precision bombings," meaning only the target areas were being hit. With report from Jaime Laude, Delmo Cruz/AFP

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Behaving badly

EDITORIAL

THE TURNAROUND OF MAGDALO MUTINEER Lt. Lawrence San Juan came with the usual prop in our still essentially black-ink culture: an affidavit, which narrates in black and white one junior officer's slow immersion in the gray areas of our military's checkered history.

Let us set aside the question of whether San Juan's affidavit is authentic; that is, whether it accurately reflects the experiences he purports to describe. That can wait for another time, but taking our cue from that branch of philosophy known as phenomenology, let us consider San Juan's written testimony as though it were true—to discover what experience and close reading can teach us.

Immediately, we realize that the narrative we are reading is all too familiar. This is not the first time we've heard this kind of conversion story, as it were, of promising officers drawn into adventurism. The rituals San Juan describes are familiar too.

We also quickly realize that San Juan's narration of events jibes with what many sources have already said, on and off the record. His identification of key personalities, for example, is something that sources in the military have been telling journalists since 2003.

Not least, we also realize, or are forcefully reminded of, an important fact lost in the turbulent wake of the Garci scandal and President Macapagal-Arroyo's resulting crisis of legitimacy. The first attempt to launch a military takeover and replace the unpopular, controversial Arroyo administration took place even before the May 2004 elections. Those who speak of alleged election fraud as though it were the administration's original sin play into the hands of those who wish to justify military intervention—regardless of the justifications.

Two and a half years after the Magdalo mutiny, a group of Marines, Scout Rangers, and police officers from the Special Action Force launched another attempt to intervene in the country's politics.

The Lopez report, which investigated the series of events last February, provides a candid and revealing look at the planned "withdrawal of support," and the role played by former coup plotters like Scout Ranger Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Marine Col. Ariel Querubin.

In the sometimes stilted language common to military documents, the report concludes that the "congruence of the event among the Philippine Marines and the Philippine Army Rangers reveals that it was not borne [sic] out of spontaneity but a deliberate and planned action." It also names Lim and Querubin as "the principal perpetrators of the failed destabilization action." Not least, it picks up the theme first sounded by the Magdalo mutineers in 2003, and repeated in San Juan's affidavit last week: that the plotters were driven by legitimate grievances in try and "eventually install a new administration."

But those grievances (none of a higher magnitude, because of the allegations of election fraud) were mere rationalizations for officers who were already disposed to intervene. In the report's own words: "The grievances raised were merely utilized as a vehicle to transmit the real intent if not to arouse patriotism and fuel the emotions in adopting insubordination, mutinous and disloyal attitudes."

We want to be clear: The politicization of the military is not the leaky abode of those in the opposition who seek like-minded officers of the Armed Forces. The administration itself bears a disproportionate share of the blame; indeed, the appointment of the so-called Garci generals—those who were named in the Glorietta wiretaps—to the highest positions in the AFP beginning with Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon, cannot but be viewed as politically motivated.

That is one fact on the ground...as hard-wood generals like to say, that the Lopez report fails to recognize or at least put on the record. But there is no arguing with what seems to us to the most poignant recommendation (repeated a few times) in the entire report: that "officers involved in past coup attempts/destabilization be banned from command of units especially elite or special units."

In fact, what both the San Juan affidavit and the Lopez report tell us is it might run of Psychology 101: behavior is reinforceable. If coup plotters are not punished as they deserve to be, they will continue to plot.

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Bribing the bishops

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

THE SCANDAL RECENTLY EXPOSED WOULD have been decidedly dismissed as an incredible contention were it not for the undeniable fact that it had been orchestrated by cassock from Malacañang who have already forfeited the people's confidence. Their known desires and pronouncements have long since become public knowledge and lost credence to the serious charges the bishops had leveled against them.

Their accusers are not ordinary enemies with selfish political or personal motives and who suspicious records of unreliable honesty. The denunciation came from none other than the supreme officials from the Catholic Church who are looked up to by their parishioners as their religious teachers and the moral leaders of the community. There may be some guilty conspirators among them but, on the whole, the members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines are respected for their spirituality and rectitude.

The charges were so incredible fantastic as to be instantly described as a children's fairy tale but of the gun kind. The details were simply unbelievable. According to the bishops attached spoken up in indignation, President Macapagal-Arroyo's buddies had recently attempted to bribe them in amongst of their known integrity.

At the recent CBCP meeting, messengers from the Palace, who should not have been there in the first place, unobtrusively slipped into their pockets envelopes containing thousands of pesos with the whispered information that these were money to whom—although this was not directly suggested—they should be grateful. They were also served sweetened teas of food and given expensive individual souvenirs, gifts or assets. And this was not the only time.

On a separate occasion, three bishops were offered checks from the Pagcor, ours for P500,000 each and the third for P200,000. Administration officials had in previous years sent bishops Christmas presents and "financial assistance." There was also the "money has gun" where they had been bribed, obviously in appreciation for their refusal to support the new impeachment complaints against Mr. Arroyo.

All these "gifts" were rejected by the donees, who felt insulted by the supposed generosity that dishonored their heads.

Many bishops had expressed dissatisfaction with President Arroyo and at least one of them had directly joined the pro-impeachers to remove her from her allegedly stolen office. Her advisers may have thought it a wise strategy to at least neutralize the rest of his colleagues if not actively enlist them against her growing list of unfavorites.

To give the secret envelopes some respectability, it was claimed to have been intended for the donees' parishes and not personally for the bishops. If so, the bishops asked, "why were the "gifts" extended secretly to them instead of directly and openly to the parishes concerned? Or better still, why were they not suffered formally to the CBCP as a body, for it to accept or reject in its discretion? Instead, the largesse was surreptitiously distributed like the loot from a pinata plundered on a feast/fiesta.

If it was true that the reason for the "gifts" was to alleviate the hardships of the poor under the social justice policy, then the bounty must have been officially drawn from the public treasury. From what discretionary fund were they taken and were those lauded vouchers for their withdrawal for verification by the auditors? Assuming certain of the envelopes were unscrupulously accepted by some cassock from the pulpit, did they issue the corresponding receipts as acknowledgment of their own mitpa?

But the less naïve of the donees's apologists would have no truck with admitting the truth of the bishops' charges. They are, to these ultra-conservatives, scandalous lies. They insist that not a single sentavo was offered or given to any bishop despite, among others, the two crew evidence of the checks from the Pagcor that were rejected by the papers, from the number of those checks to who was reported by the insurance in the name of July 13, 2006.

It is Christ's divine right to say that the scandal is a "smear campaign" of the opposition and "the Devil's handiwork," with which they must be familiar. As the most unpopular President in our history, she is never before, in front, more innocent than the untouchable bishops who have instigated her. An infallible Pollyanna!

Despite the fact that the bishops, the successor of the accused must be presumed until the contrary is proved. If this were a criminal case, I would say that the bishops have overcome that presumption and the burden of proof has shifted to the defense. More denial will not suffice to secure an acquittal, and neither will its invocation of immunity from suit or calling.

The writs of justice have turned, and the verdict must now be in favor of the bishops. If this matter is welcomed to the Supreme Court, let us hope it will not cop-out as usual and invoke decisive justice and hobble its own power, it is the sovereign people, whatever their faith or non-faith, who will render the final judgment.

Leader or dealer?

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A MAN WHO had such a strong inferiority complex that whenever he entered an elevator and gave the attendant his floor number, he always duly added, "I'll tell you if you're wrong."

* * *

In today's Gospel (Mk. 6, 30-34), it is told that Jesus went out of His way and missed us to teach the vast crowd. Why? Because His heart was moved with pity for them. "For they were like sheep without a shepherd." A true leader is one who goes out of his/her way for his/her followers. In the light of Jesus' example, church and government leaders today would do well to ask the following questions: Do I still have a heart? Am I still moved with pity? Am I willing to go out of my way and sacrifice for the crowd? Perhaps, the deeper and more relevant question would be: Am I getting in the way?

* * *

We are to Jesus a leader who puts service above self, who puts mission over ambition, self-consolation over self-preservation, who puts the people's needs over and above his own needs. The heart of a true leader is a heart that knows how to sacrifice.

* * *

Jesus was a considerate leader who looked after the physical well-being of His followers. He told them to rest awhile, as no sooner was there anyone to relieve them. In other words, He was not a user. How do we treat people who work for and with us? Do we treat them as workhorses? Are we sensitive to their needs? Are we kind to their aspirations, hopes and dreams?

* * *

Jesus was a protective leader to His followers. Till the very end when He was arrested, He requested that His followers be set free: "Let me to today's Gospel, Jesus telling His followers to go to a deserted place to rest awhile. As His self stayed behind to watch the crowd. A true leader is one who senses and protects. A leader who is just being protected and who is just being served has ceased to be a true leader.

* * *

Jesus was a leader, not a dealer. Jesus did not treat people as mere commodities that could be bought or sold. In very clear terms, He gave the message that He Himself could not be bought. Sad, very sad, that for many of our leaders today, money is the bottom line; that's all, and that's it.

* * *

It is interesting to note that even our bishops are not being spared by dealers of dirty money. From the their recent spiritual retreat, they were "graced" with the presence of envelope- and gift-giving people, "wolves in sheep's clothing" whose only purpose was to divide or discredit them. Since what? They have become more concerned with the poor than the rich. Is this why? The success of their actions is easily suspected. Slowly but surely our people especially our children, are beginning to realize the magnitude, the depth and the height of the moral decay pervading our society today—a society that is run by heartless dealers, not leaders.

* * *

When good people are persecuted and punished and evil doers are being promoted and rewarded, there is something or very terribly wrong. When evil does not only seem to prosper but does prosper in a society, then we can conclude that it is no longer leadership, but dealership that is operative.

* * *

"How much?" Until The has become the letter this question spreadsheet. "Name your price" has become the final statement nowadays. In short, "Deal, or No deal?" For whom money has ceased to be a means but has become the end. Money is the be-all and end-all of our existence. Money is the be-all and end-all of our existence. Money is the be-all and end-all of our existence.

* * *

Jesus invites all of us today to go to a deserted place and rest awhile. How important it is to take time (make time!) to rest, reflect and recharge. Only in silence, reflection and prayer can we really see where we really are and where we are going. Only when we really listen to God (and not just talk to Him) can we see what we need to change in our lives. Prayer really works. But how come some prayerful people continue to be corrupt and evil? Maybe, they do not really listen to God to prayer. Surely, it is because they do not obey what God tells them in their prayer.

* * *

This is a long shot but I'm taking it anyway. It's an appeal to the conscience of the man who bumped Annie Thorne with his car's bike at about 7:30 p.m. last June 19, Monday in the vicinity of Clark International Airport. Annie, on her bicycle, died of head. Her motorcycle had no lights. But what made the whole accident so painful was that the motorcycle rider, after flagging down a passing, sped off, never to be seen again. By your information, Annie passed away last June 23, at the age of 16. Please, sir, have a conscience, have a heart. And don't forget, God knows you. God sees you. Please confess.

* * *

A moment with The Lord.

Lord, give us good leaders, not dealers in our land. Amen.

Change of command

REVELLE

Ramon J. Farolan

LAST FRIDAY MAY THE INSTALLATION OF THE ninth AFP chief of staff during the incumbency of President Macapagal-Arroyo. After serving as the added 11 months — possibly the most meritorious 11 months in his distinguished military career — Gen. Generoso Senga turned over the reins of command to his successor, former Army Chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. Esperon, who will be serving in this post 8000 days, has left a lot more time on the job than many of his predecessors.

Somehow, I can remember that last April, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz spoke about preparing to change the retirement ceremony in the AFP. He recommended the reduction of the number of military officers after 30 years of service (when one was promoted to brigadier general or undersecretary, whereupon the officer would be relieved from the service of the line). If promoted to major general, the officer would be relieved another four years. A further advance to lieutenant general or vice admiral would give him an additional three years; and if he was appointed AFP chief of staff, the officer would serve for a maximum of three years.

Pursuant to that plan, the Senate approved Republic Act 9163. Signed into law by Gen. Rodolfo Biazon, it provides for a fixed tenure of three years for the AFP chief. But the issue has been dragging in the House of Representatives, and as we can see from the appointment of Esperon, it is not yet time for retiring the Armed Forces leadership. There appears to be no serious move to change the existing retention despite pronouncements to the contrary by the administration.

After a long institutional period of admonishing the presence of family and relatives, as well as supporters representing various organizations and persuasions, the new chief of staff threw round of applause when he announced the breakup of the Southern Command (Southcom) into two separate commands — the Western Mindanao Command, headquartered in Zamboanga City, and the Eastern Mindanao Command, headquartered in Davao City, and another for the western portion of the island with headquarters in Zamboanga City. Considering the size of Mindanao and the sheer diversity posed by communist and Moro insurgencies, this restructuring seems overdue.

However, let us hope that the creation of these commands will not result in more war zones for the devoted Forces. I wonder this soon will not sit well with some officers in the organization, for we just have too many personnel in relation to the remaining troop strength. Even the retirement of generals activated will have to be supported by personnel and equipment, diverting resources that could better be utilized by the soldiers in the field. Perhaps, we could downgrade one of the existing unified commands — the Central Command — and the proposed reorganization in Mindanao. It is time to consolidate this issue and Defense Secretary Cruz may wish to include it among his Defense Reform initiatives.

In his maiden speech as the new chief of staff, General Esperon also revealed his concern for the welfare of the men in uniform, citing the various housing programs which he vowed to pursue during his term of office.

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It has been reported by well-meaning friends in media and even by the President, that General Esperon is the first Presidential security chief to reach the coveted position of AFP chief of staff. It is time to correct this error in our appreciation of our history. Whatever may be our views about Fidel Ramos, he would be the first to tell you that his presidential security chief to become AFP chief of staff, succeeding Gen. Romeo Alpino on June 15, 1981. Espino served in the position for nine years and six months — the longest tour of duty of any AFP chief of staff. Both Ver and Espino were ROTC graduates and during their time, many service commanders were products of the ROTC program.

At the time of the proclamation of martial law, when Espino was chief of staff, the Army consisted by Maj. Gen. Fidel Dagda, also of PMA 1949, graduate; the Philippine Navy was headed by Rear Adm. Rolinton Bale, a Naval ROTC graduate of the Philippine Normal School, while the Air Force chief was Brig. Gen. Jose Rancudo from the PAF Flying School. The Constabulary was headed by Maj. Gen. Fidel Ramos, a later Davao graduate. When Ramos ter was left chief of staff, the Army was led by Gen. Jonathan Ratilan, the Navy, Rear Adm. Manuel Abellana, and the Air Force, Maj. Gen. Homer Pio — all were PMA graduates. The Constabulary remained under Maj. Gen. Fidel Ramos.

After the Edsa Revolution, all the AFP chiefs of staff, save the exception of Gen. Fidel Ramos, were from the Philippine Military Academy and as were most of the service commanders under them. While the role played by the ROTC in this trend is likely to continue, except perhaps in the Philippine Air Force which can tap other sources for its commissioned officers.

Interestingly, Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino answered communist calls to the Philippine Army and served his term. Both officers belong to PMA Class '74, while the Air Force and the Navy are headed by Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes and Vice Adm. Mateo Reyes, respectively, both members of PMA Class '73.

* * *

Personal notes: The Calderon brothers, Oscar and Leonardo Jr., Phil and male chauvinist, respectively, are the sons of Lt. Leonardo Calderon who served in the Air Defense Office when I was G2, PAF. Leonardo Jr. is married to Tonette Orejana, daughter of ex-boss to the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok, the late Lt.Col. Jesse Orejana.

No decaf, please

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE
Patricia Evangelista

I SENT OFFICE SPACE AT 10:15. A BIT I SHOW UP AT around nine in the morning, still-not-a-(beer)-good morning to the people at the counters, pick up my cup of coffee and, clutching the inside-curving file in mine. Then it's upstairs to the chair — high back are dropped to the floor, feet are ordered in and there is the minute long scrabbling for usually notebook and found notes.

I don't go there every day — twice a week, sometimes three, depending on deadlines. But my wallet and my stomach can take it. I share my office with dozens of others who — except for two casual tables. Beside me, there's a couple drumming away on laptops. Judging from the amount of paperwords piled between them, I'm assuming they're composing a grant proposal to the former bosses on the merits of using international political relations for safeguarding aid to Third World countries. Behind me is a group of Indonesian types, sporting bandanas, glasses and colorful shirts, animatedly clapping each other in the back, speaking rapidly in their native tongue. Every time I enter, I promise myself to listen in on them. Every time I do, a young man bounded into a jacket and two sweaters, stumbling to himself from a dark room, while dragging a pale hand through his curly hair.

I only socialized between 1 and 12 hours, leaving a few minutes before the barista looks down and tried to pick me with it. Knowing pounded out thirty Power on an old cliché-ridden article ending in her version of my office. If The Great Filipino Novel somehow surfaces in the pockets of time between pounding out columns, writing scripts and scribbling on friends, odes, blogs, then the PBI for a short last hurrah (plans with please) will be well-spent.

The Age of Enlightenment descended into the world with the advent of the coffee cup. Essentially, coffee sets the mood in motion, stimulates the muscles and drains energy. Thirteen hundred years ago, Muslim coffee shops — and spread their money, all for a little time, black, dark, nasty, bitter, smoking concoction possible sense!

It is "the secretive art of that newfangled, abominable, bombastic liquor called coffee" that has "nourished" those thousands upon thousands of people who, in the course of time "so impotent, as age, and so enfeebled as those drowsy wherein that unhappy coffee hath a seed to be brought."

Women, it seemed, weren't going to take things lying down. They preferred to sit on top. Writings, that is.

In 1674, Women's Petition Against Coffee was published on behalf of his, adding a an added drink. Women: The Grave condemned coffee as "disgusting," and employed coffee smellers to sniff and audit through the sewers of Drunia for the illicit aroma of steaming coffee beans.

Coffee, as a Turkish proverb claims, "should be black as hell, as strong as death and as sweet as love." One of my friends claims otherwise, as coffee, he says it "is best as love." Whether that is a reflection of his preference for black coffee or a reflection of his love life is something I'd rather not ask.

Beyond every successful woman, I can tell, is a cohesive information of coffee and caffeine. Behind every successful man stand no less than Palmers Penn, as my cup-a-day is nowhere near the world average. But I have found there is no better place in the world to sit and write — there's the energy rumpling in the air, the babble of voices and the distant sway from the same hummed my mouth and feet.

In Manila, there are a few places that have seen strong coffee fills into the mainland, "their gold-starch hats motion, instrument-change in the country of sensation displays with a magnificent gallop, the artillery of huge cups up with dawning suggestion and carriages on imaginary-men orders, sharp-swords right and fine, bridges of the cup-handles, and the whole army is spread with ink." In coffee is the reason why my computer screen is currently flung with words, used to drink the same.

In modern days, Tatbay and Sytia, coffeehouses are gathering places for class players and TV famous. In the United States, they are the necessary pit stop in the race to increase coffee and caffeine. In Paris, cafés double as both bar and house, while the Iranian cafe is quickly gaining ground. In Amsterdam, a coffeehouse is the neighborhood drugstore for regulated marijuana.

In the Philippines, the coffeehouse has replaced the sports bar as the center of action in the place for a guy to go for the first date or an casual squeeze of a girl's hand — and where girlfriend spend hopelessly in a not-so-casual crush with That Girl. Black leather couches, where ballistic are made, lost and regained, have replaced the beaten-down seats.

No longer are perfect cars and quiet back alleys the places for love to grow. Part of this is the ease with which it comes to avail our information, they know anyone that lends in casual or cellular phones. But as with the 17th century, where the coffeehouse area the only place where "you have the right to read all the papers for and against the government," so must coffeehouses be now.

I can see it now, men in dark suits standing discreetly at the corners of C3 and Ben Banks, waiting for the go-signal to leap for the unsuspecting man with the ice-blended mocha. And then the terminal chaos, — ballistic high-action cautioning patrons to policemen, side by side with the indignant man-in-mocha-mocha-mocha expressions, and the young-mother-throwing-brawl-in-law school books.

* * *

E-mail the author at pat.evangelista@gmail.com

Assault on Biak na Bato

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT TOOK JUST 30 MINUTES FOR MOUNT Everest "victims" Leo Oclarino and Ernie "Turbo" Tolosa, together with other members of the Philippine Mount Everest Expedition (PMEE) to scale 8,848-foot Mandalum inside the Biak na Bato National Park in Bulacan.

But the good of last month's climb wasn't really to be the summit — for the team's main goal, of course, was not just Everest, another acre of "sands" was on their minds, the summit on Biak na Bato being carried out by training companies who will be sending their employees to undergo mountain-climbing endurance with their inside quarry big incentives.

Some 200 mountaineers, environmentalists, media workers, students, barkadas, and other public representatives joined the expedition's assault to the climb, among the distinguished the names of the damage managers in the Pasig.

As Jimmy notes, it's relatively not him. "We can never preach Biak na Bato to anybody the way it was," laments a mountain-mountain group leader. "Environment control na lang." added Mahmud Gov. Amy Jo Grad. Many mountaineers have been grouped to the mountain's slopes to climb the mountain's face, inside as fast that a broken pre-mium piece dented, especially in China where the mountain inside is considered "lucky."

Following a mutiny-secured assembly assembled in Biak Bato and Dr. Cruz, who's the main dominant of the assembly was for the PMEE to control the mountain reduction in Bulacan, the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) is tied with dominion, the PAMB board announced that he had ordered the cessation of all DENR within Biak inclusion.

Last July 12, Bates suspended the operations of Boundless Resources Inc. and Mines and Metallic, stating there it "no valid ground" for doing so. As the same time, he "cancelled" the permits of the small-scale mining groups, even if the operations of these groups had been given the go-ahead by the municipal mayor and have not been resisted.

Faced with the DENR's continued inaction, the private sector had a different plan up in front of the provincial capitol, marching a "reconciliation" on the member of the Biak that had passed before

Secretary Bates vowed before Bulacan residents that he would put a stop to the mining in Biak na Bato.

Meantime, concerned citizens living near Biak na Bato have reported that they still hear blasting going on within the park.

* * *

IMAGINE what could have happened if, 10 years ago — when environmental groups first sought to call public attention to what was going on in Biak na Bato — government authorities had acted with dispatch and put a stop to all forms of mining within the park.

Imagine if the governor and the rest of the provincial government, as well as the local government executives of the municipalities in the area where Biak na Bato eventually made political concerns (the mining firms employed them) had made of health and took a long look at the view of the situation.

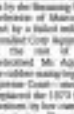
Perhaps, if authorities had acted in the time, the landslide done on the mountains, the caves, the forest cover, the underground water supply would still have been retained, and Biak na Bato would not have to be declared a national park. Moreover, despite the good intentions of groups like the Ilocano Bandalismo in view of the provincial government of the DENR, there is a possibility that some of the damage done to Biak na Bato is irreversible. Certainly, we can no longer restore the mountain-sides that were destroyed for shuffle dirts that now lie on the valley floors and walls of pools below in Biak na Bato.

Governor De la Cruz admits that environmental protection weren't very high in her priorities in her first two terms, and that she felt she could very well survive on the support of the environmentalists in the interest of the DENR. "I have apologized publicly for being a bystander on this issue," she says.

"But now doing this can not any allow me to that what I decide to do with the rest of Biak," she says, with their wooded protection. She has notified of working with civic organizations to ensure the that list of Biak na Bato and says it is now a major eco-tourism destination. But first, the blasting will have to stop, and the destruction must be halted even further damage.

The legitimacy crisis and its effects

PUBLIC LIVES



Randy David

IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT'S CURRENT crisis is the failure of the political system to put to rest persistent doubts about the right of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to continue exercising the powers of the presidency. The principal cause of this failure is the current inability to present its institutions against abuse by a reckless politician desperate to keep herself in power.

Political legitimacy is the principle undergirding every successful regime. It is the basis of public consensus rather than coercion. Legitimacy enables them to face suspicion by citizens of their motives, and their willingness to be bound by decisions made in their name. The absence of legitimacy, on the other hand, is the root of public disaffection, a legitimacy crisis can result in civil political unrest, and engulf a whole social order.

In modern democracies, legitimacy is not a resource that comes from outside society. It is rather created by society's internal processes, in particular by its political system. This system proposes visions of progress and offers the leaders who are supposed to embody such visions. The public chooses among these visions and elects them. The preservation of the sanctity of the ballot has become the core of this process. But legitimacy is more than just winning elections or conforming to procedures. It ultimately rests on what an organization politic is willing to accept.

In 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos declared a state of martial law over government by declaring national law. He jailed dissenting journalists and politicians, and ordered the military to patrol the streets to maintain order. Those appears to be no serious move to change the existing situation despite pronouncements to the contrary by the administration.

Only a long institutional period of admonishing the presence of family and relatives, as well as supporters representing various organizations and persuasions, the new chief of staff threw round of applause when he announced the breakup of the Southern Command (Southcom) into two separate commands — the Western Mindanao Command, headquartered in Zamboanga City, and the CPPMP, there with headquarters in

Ramos-Cruz and another for the western portion of the island with headquarters in Zamboanga City. Considering the size of Mindanao and the sheer diversity posed by communist and Moro insurgencies, this restructuring seems overdue.

However, let us hope that the creation of these commands will not result in more war zones for the devoted Forces. I wonder this soon will not sit well with some officers in the organization, for we just have too many personnel in relation to the remaining troop strength. Even the retirement of generals activated will have to be supported by personnel and equipment, diverting resources that could better be utilized by the soldiers in the field. Perhaps, we could downgrade one of the existing unified commands — the Central Command — and the proposed reorganization in Mindanao. It is time to consolidate this issue and Defense Secretary Cruz may wish to include it among his Defense Reform initiatives.

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* * *

Comment is public line@gmail.com

THEY SAID

Others first

"I want to share with everybody that in times of crisis, some people can be so selfless they would think of you first. And I should take my hat off to those that helped us." —Rudy Tiongco Boys Garage, on how while (1996) in Baguio they found her with 5 hundred quarts of the Rudy Tiongco Boys while Miguel Vila

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TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to ...
Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

AT WAR WITH ISRAEL

Hezbollah and Hamas guerrillas

ISRAEL IS FIGHTING ON TWO FRONTS—IN GAZA AGAINST HAMAS AND IN LEBANON against Hezbollah. The crisis began in Gaza when Hamas guerrillas smashed an Israeli army border post on June 25 and abducted an Israeli soldier.

Israel's response was swift and brutal. It bombed power stations, buildings and seized at least 64 Hamas officials in an attempt to secure the release of Corporal Gilad Shalit. He is still in the hands of Hamas.

The second front opened on July 12 when Hezbollah guerrillas crossed into northern Israel, killed eight Israeli soldiers and took two others as hostages.

The response of the Israel Defense Forces was massive. The IDF blew up Beirut's international airport, highways, bridges, buildings and power plants, and blockaded ports. Its artillery pounded southern Lebanon. More than 300 people have been killed to the attacks, mostly civilians.

Hamas and Hezbollah are fighting back with rockets. Hundreds of Hezbollah missiles and rockets have rained down on settlements in northern Israel, including the port city of Haifa, killing a number of people. Hezbollah has doubled an Israeli warning—50 days—that it is using a cease standstill.

The war has displaced half a million people in Lebanon, including tens of thousands of foreign nationals. There are some 34,000 Filipino workers in Lebanon, mostly domestics who have yet to be evacuated.

The conflict is tied to Iran and Syria, which back support Hamas and Hezbollah. It is reported that the Hezbollah attack on Israeli forces came a day after fruitless talks in Brussels between Iran and representatives of the European Union, Britain, France, Germany and Russia over the proposal to stop Iran's nuclear enrichment program in exchange for incentives.

Party of God

FOLLOWING THE ISRAELI invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Hezbollah (meaning "Party of God") was formed by a group of Muslim clerics to resist Israeli forces.

The Lebanese Muslim Shiite group, which takes its ideological inspiration from the Islamic revolution and the teachings of the late Ayatollah Khomeini, is dedicated to "destroying Israel and eventually seizing Israel."

It advocates the establishment of Islamic rule in Lebanon, the creation of an Iranian-style Islamic republic and the removal of all non-Islamic influences from the area.

The ideological roots of Hezbollah were set forgiveness into the existence of Israel.

It is listed as a terrorist organization by the United States because of a series of bombings, kidnappings and hijackings it carried out in the 1980s and early 1990s. Hezbollah was behind the 1983 suicide bombing in Beirut that killed 241 US Marines.

Coalition government

Hezbollah has been actively involved in the Lebanese political system since 1992, mostly as an opposition party.

But after the 2005 election, it became a member of the governing coalition. Hezbollah and a few parties it had aligned with took the unanimous 19 seats available to Shiite Muslims in the 128-member Parliament. Hezbollah members now serve as ministers and have subsidiaries. A chief minister is endorsed by the group.

The group has quickened popular support in Lebanon by setting up schools, hospitals and other social services.

Fighters

A UN State Department report in 2005 placed Hezbollah's strength at several thousands. However, Hezbollah sources quoted in a report by Global Security placed the number of fighters between 5,000 and 10,000. Other sources reported a core of 500 to 600 fighters trained by Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

The Revolutionary Guards are said to have maintained a presence in Lebanon since the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran.

Hezbollah operates in Lebanon's Shiite-dominated areas in parts of Beirut, southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

Missiles

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said on a speech last year that the group had more than 12,000 rockets, believed to be mostly Katyusha rockets.

Israel believes Hezbollah has received Chinese-made anti-ship missiles, which can hit ships at least 80 kilometers off the coast of Lebanon.

Hezbollah's arsenal also includes Iranian-supplied Chinese-made anti-tank missiles, which can penetrate armor plating, and Iranian-supplied unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) capable of carrying explosives.

The group has also received sophisticated communications equipment, including encrypted radios and satellite telephones.

HOLDING posters of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, young Lebanese men chant slogans during an anti-Israeli demonstration as Palestine Square in Tehran, Iran on July 16.

Muslim Brotherhood

HAMAS IS AN ISLAMIC fundamentalist organization formed by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin at the beginning of the first intifada beginning in December 1987. A Sunni group, Hamas is an offshoot of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Both names which can be translated to mean "zeal, courage or bravery" (Hamas' acronym) also stands for "Harakat Al-Muqawama Al-Islamiya" (Islamic Resistance Movement). Hamas is dedicated to the "establishment of an Islamic Palestinian state that corresponds to...and the Nine Bank and Gaza."

A short one-sentence the right of Israel to exist. Its charter, approved in 1988, proclaims that the entire land of "destroying the state of Israel (through Allah) is...holy war." Hamas believes that the entire Palestine, including the portion the state of Israel, Israel and the West Bank, as a Sole possession "consecrated for future Muslim generations."

Prime minister

Hamas began participating in Palestinian elections after Arafat died in 2004. The group was popular among impoverished Palestinians because of its health, education and welfare services and because of its opposition to and being corrupt.

Social programs

Its social programs include the building of schools, hospitals and welfare institutions. Hamas built many in poverty, high security, the corruption scandals in the Palestinian authority and high unemployment, contributed greatly to Hamas' victory in January.

The results of the election alarmed other countries and international organizations, particularly the United States, the European Union, which had branded Hamas as a terrorist group.

Despite threats of diplomatic isolation, Hamas refused to agree with the conditions set forth by Russia, the EU, the US and the United Nations—which mostly involved the disbandment of Hamas' armed wing and its recognition of Israel.

Aid cut

In April, following the inauguration of all cabinet with the Moderate Palestinian government, the EU announced its decision to stop all direct financial aid to the Hamas government. The ban involved all "transactions with the Palestinian authority including security transfers, payment, settlement, export or any kind of deal with "assets in which the Palestinian Authority has an interest and participation."

The US, along with the EU, decided to stop sending "all but humanitarian aid" to the Palestinians and threatened to refusing to recognize Israel's right to exist and Hamas's violence. Israel, which had been collecting taxes on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, announced a "permanent halt" to the monthly transfer of about $50 million to Palestinians.

The funds have also refused to deal with the Palestinian Authority. Hamas lawmaker by the US, which had established all kinds of international dealings with Hamas.

The fund freeze resulted in an...mail minister for more 165,000 Palestinians, many of whom were...were which domestic pension had already broken out.

Qassam rockets

Hamas' military wing is believed to be composed of more than 1,000 armed members, according to a June 2006 report by the Council on Foreign Relations. Its sympathizers and supporters are said to number "thousands."

Aside from making suicide bombers for the intifada, Hamas has accepted responsibility for an...mostly in Israeli territory using home-made Qassam rockets (Improvised rocket artillery).

The rockets, which are 70 cm to 140 cm long, are usually made from metal tubing. They are filled from metal shrink and have a maximum range of 14 km.

Feeding An Hamas came from Palestinian organizations, private donations and from Arabic countries, mostly Persian Gulf states. Iran is also reportedly funding Hamas.

Syria, for its part, harbors Khaled Mashal, the political leader of Hamas.

Corporal Shalit

In the hours following the Hamas attack on an Israeli army border post on June 25, Israel sent tanks and troops into Gaza in the largest Israeli ground operation on the Gaza Strip since its withdrawal from the territory last year.

Israel seized no less 64 of the Hamas officials from the West Bank in order to pressure the Palestinian militant into releasing Corporal Gilad Shalit, who was abducted during the attack.

Militants from Gaza immediately firing a rocket into Ashkelon on June 4. Israel has vowed to...to stop the rocket attacks. Reuters

LEBANON AT A GLENCE

Capital: Beirut
Land area: 10,400 sq km
Population: 3,874,050
Language: Arabic, French
GDP per capita: $6,200
Armed forces: About 62,000

Lebanon, the land of the Phoenicians centuries before Christ, was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire from 1516 to 1918. In 1920, by a French decree, the mountainous territory was called "Grand-Liban" or Great Lebanon.

The state remained under the French until the republic's independence on Nov. 22, 1943. Departure of foreign troops on the republic's territory was completed on Dec. 31, 1946.

Civil war

Lebanon has a mixed population of Christians (Maronite, Greek Orthodox or Greek Roman Catholic), and Sunni, Shia and Druze Muslims.

By July 14, Hezbollah announced "open war" against Israel after his soldiers in Shiite-town Hezbollah...

At least 500 people have been killed more than a week into the assault. Also if that war, PM Bureau of Lebanon Liberation Organization. The civil war claimed more than 150,00 lives.

Shortly after the war started, Syrian troops moved into Lebanon. Israel invaded the country in 1978 and in 1982 almost pushed back to a security zone. Israeli troops withdrew in May 2000.

In 1978, a UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIH) was created to "confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon...restore international peace and security and help the Lebanese government restore effective authority in the area. UNIH, still based in southern Lebanon...has 1,895 troops.

An accord in 1989 that formally ended the civil war reserved key government positions for each main religious group. It says that Lebanon's prime minister should be a Sunni Muslim, the president a Maronite Christian and the speaker of the Parliament a Shiite Muslim.

Syria exerted strong influence on Lebanese politics until 2005 when it pulled back its forces, putting an end to a military presence of 29 years.

Assassination

The departure of Syrian troops resulted from the uprising that protested the killing of Rafik Hariri, a former prime minister, by a car bomb in February 2005. Opposition groups in Lebanon blamed Syria.

Rallies were held in Beirut for and against Syria in March 2005. It all ended with the fall of the Syrian-backed government in April 2005. Then Prime Minister Omar Karami stepped down.

The departure of Syria gave Hezbollah a bigger role in Lebanon. After the 2005 elections, it became part of the coalition government.

Mel Lawrence de Guzman, PDN Research

INQUIRER Mindanao

Women power on handmade paper

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Davao City

HER FINGERS RAN GENTLY through the grayish-brown thick paper as if caressing it, running it over carefully in great anticipation of a colorful export-quality product.

Later, as the dreaded the sense of pure-off her fingers, she confessed that her two-month job would always send her feelings of exhilaration and pleasure at the end of the day.

"It is also tiring, but the tiring part of the job is a given. The camaraderie, though, is the product itself that naturally washes the exhaustion off," said Mary Flor Parafin, 28, as she showed off the paper that looked like a picture frame in the making.

Parafin works as a "processor," along with other out-of-school youth and jobless women, in a nongovernment organization called the Kabalaysan sa Kaunlaran ng Kalikasan nga Hanon sa Kinalipdan ug Kamunguan (loosely translated as Empowering Women in Agriculture through Appropriate Technology in Harmony with the Environment) or Kakasa.

She converts handmade paper to creative products like greeting and invitation cards, scrap books, picture frames, boxes, gift bags and lampshades, which are often seen or displayed in malls and luxurious, stylish houses locally and abroad.

15-YEAR-OLD Mary Flor Parafin (top right) working for her sixteen-year-old year. Lampshades made out of durian fibers, a breakthrough in the local handmade paper industry only by women of Kadayanan.

For the community

With her earnings, she intends to continue her education next school year.

Like other women, young and old, Parafin wants it not to produce items that will benefit her small community in Kadayanan, Panabo City in Davao del Norte.

The women in Kadayanan are also engaged in gathering raw materials, like cogon grass, abaca, banana and durian husks, which are made into colorful papers.

The city board Kalahan (which also means proprietary or efficiency) supports the women's peasant group Kabalaysan sa Kalipdan ug Kalamboan (Kadayanan Women for Development) or the KKK. The partnership has grown stronger since the handmade paper project started in 1994.

At first, the project was undertaken by another nongovernment organization, Devlink, which was responsible for the technology and funding, with the technical support of the Department of Science and Technology, said Estelly Mora, executive director of Kamikat.

For the environment

As an environmental group, Kalahan promotes sustainable agriculture among farming communities of Davao and Davao del Norte to improve their food security and livelihood.

It also advocates the protection of the environment through the promotion of organic and diversified agriculture. It considers the reliance of monoculture farming, like banana and pineapple plantations, on synthetic chemicals a big threat to the people's livelihood and health and the environment.

Kalahan recognizes the important role of women in rural development by imparting skills to achieve integrated systems of organic agricultural production through appropriate and nature-friendly technologies.

Mora said the paper project was a response to the need of women in the community for a source of income, using materials that are raw or indigenous to the community.

"We conducted a socioeconomic study in the village and ... (t)hrough their own help and initiative, it was realized that the area was actually rich with raw materials which can be used to fill in the need of village women," she said.

THESE colorful scrapbooks are produced by the village women of Kadayanan in Panabo City, Davao del Norte.

For the women

The groups behind the KKK saw the potentials and interest of the women, Mora said.

Through the help of Devlink and the DOST, the handmade paper project was launched. Initially, the women got only P5,000 to produce and operations fund. Their first product: All-cotton cards.

"The first few operations were through a tough time. It was on-and-off, depending on the availability of funds. And their products were already running in inventory and style," Mora said.

After three trying years, the group underwent the most needed facelift. Their organization strengthened and their products evolved from something mediocre to competitive.

"Women are naturally creative but they need a need for someone to show me from them that hidden creativity and skills. The rest the women we needed some designers who taught the women how to operate each materials—from dyeing the papers to the art of conversion and production," Mora said.

The Asia Pan Trade Forum sent a Filipino designer to help the group. The designer, Mora said, had been involved in projects of member-organizations of the forum in other countries.

World-class products

She said the group was constantly invited to different skill enhancement training sessions, which had tremendously helped the Kadayanan women develop world-class products.

Last year, their products were adjudged the National Shoppers' Choice by the Asia-Pacific Shoppers' Choice Institute. They were also named No. 1 Handmade Paper Products during the National Shoppers' Choice Annual Awards.

In 1998, the handmade items were chosen Second Best Product by the Canadian International Development Agency during the Canada Fund Trade Fair and Exhibition.

Today, the products are sold in the domestic market, sales demand is growing, and exports to the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Japan, United Kingdom and Canada.

Establishing the markets was not done overnight, Mora said, but through effective linkages with other groups and maintaining the quality of the products.

Making a difference

"Paper making has really made a difference in our lives that is why we are doing everything that we can to make quality papers and make the public happy," said Veronica Mabing, chairperson of the KKK.

The successful product, she said, is never enough reason for them to stop.

"When there are volumes of orders, we work even until nine in the evening to save the deadlines and the demand. Still, we do not compromise the quality of the product that we deliver because the customers might change their brains and instead get papers from others," she said.

Last year, the group reached its target income of P1 million, 25 percent of which came from exports. In 2004, the group raised its target of P500,000, and the year before, P400,000.

So far, the KKK is the only group that produces handmade paper from durian fibers.

"We are proud of our products that really passed quality standards, but our edge over other handmade paper producers is that we are so far the only organization using durian as raw material," Mora said.

Durian as raw material is a bit cheaper and fibrous compared to other sources, she said. Fibers extracted from durian are stronger than those from sugar, banana, and abaca.

"But while the preparation is so meticulous, we don't actually consider this as a challenge. What we have challenged is the men in to provide women with job, making them more empowered and a productive sector of society," she stressed.

Mora said the group was working on their re-enrollment with the International Federation of Alternative Trade, which could be the easy gateway to penetrate other foreign countries.

"We want to see more women empowered ... more working productive women," she said.

She only did the project helped empower women but it also helped strengthen family values, said Juanita Galpo, another KKK member.

"Through the project, my family learned the art of helping out each other with every household responsibility. My children are now helping my husband in the farm and with other chores. My husband would even cook food and bring some to me whenever I am working late," Galpo said.

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Items to Bid For (With requirements)	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Venue of Pre-bid Conference	Date/Venue of Submission and Opening of Bids	Non-Refundable Fee
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Only bidders registered with the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) for procurement of goods and services shall be allowed to participate in the bidding process. Bidders may obtain the list of the registration requirements for procurement of goods and services at the Office of the BAC Chairman, Commissioner Renato R. Valdecantos, 2nd floor PRC Main Bldg., starting on July 24, 2006. Start of the issuance of Certification of Registration to bidders shall be on August 4, 2006.

Bid forms and the Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained by interested bidders starting on July 24, 2006 from the Office of the BAC Chairman.

The PRC Bids and Awards Committee shall screen the eligibility of prospective bidders based on their compliance with the eligibility requirements on a pass/fail basis, evaluate, and post-qualify bids based on a set of criteria of responsiveness to the Commission's need.

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The Commission reserves the right to verify the veracity of any information or authenticity of any document submitted in the course of bidding and to undertake social inspection of offices and facilities of bidders. It likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality therein, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the PRC. It shall not assume any responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid, nor does it guarantee that all award will be made.

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1 more added to death toll of Left

BALAUAG, ZAMBALES—THE KILLINGS AND abductions of political activists and their supporters have resumed in Central Luzon after a two-week respite.

Just more than 24 hours apart, a supporter of the party-list group Bayan Muna was gunned down, while her leader was illegally arrested and four activists were abducted, reports from the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan said on Saturday.

Israel Guerrero, a vendor and an Anakpawis supporter, was shot and killed by a lone gunman in his house in Mexico, Pampanga, at 10:30 p.m. on Friday.

Police said the gunman, armed with an M-16 rifle, shot Guerrero, 41, in the head. The suspect and his two companions fled toward the Mexican Home Resettlement, police said.

Whereas said the suspect was looking for Guerrero's father, Dr. Oscar, and his brother, Marlon.

Bayan said Lovie Anegalang, a labor leader at a poultry farm, was picked up by soldiers in his house in Barangay Quebiawan in the City of San Fernando on Thursday night.

Col. Rolando Vinoya, commander of the 69th Infantry Battalion, on Saturday confirmed that Sangalang was in the Army's headquarters in Mauban.

Vinoya said Sangalang was invited for questioning on his links with the New People's Army. He said the labor leader agreed to come under the custody of the barangay captain, Roman Feliman, Bayan Central Luzon chair, and Sangalang was being held until investigators could ask a lawyer.

The four activists, on the other hand, were abducted in Lupao, Nueva Ecija, also on Thursday night. Feliman said no other details were available as Army officials banned the entry of Bayan members during mission hours.

In Isabela, a member of the Ilocanong Maghahabol ng Hiyas raw was shot and wounded in front of a public market in Reina Mercedes on Friday.

Supt. Romeo Uy, Baguio police chief, told Benjamin Lucero, 52, that village chief of Santa Fe Nueva Ecija, was taken to the Bautista Oy de Memorial Hospital and was reported to be in critical condition.

Uy said Lucero was shot in the back by two men aboard a motorcycle at about 8 p.m.

The attack came a day after Marlouna Castillo, Anakpawis-Isabela secretary general, was shot and killed by two men in Echague town.

In Bagulo City, relatives of a suspected NPA rebel, who was arrested by soldiers in an encounter on June 7, asked Army officials to present him.

Benito Cardio said her son, Delfin, 20, has been missing since the encounter in Sallapadan, Abra. She said her son was wounded in that clash. —Tonette Orejas, *PDI* General Luna Desk, and Hilton Pinpin, Jr. and Dexter Cabalza, *PDI* Northern Luzon Bureau

LIVELIHOOD

Fishermen set out in their daily work on Guimaras Island despite warning weather recently that brought big waves and strong winds. The view of a side of a mountain on the island does not bode well for the stormy weather that these fishermen in their small boat are facing out in the sea.

ROUNDUP

Tree planting launched

TUGUEGARAO CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has launched a re-greening project that will involve the planting of trees along the shoulders of the Maharlika Highway in Cagayan Valley. Dubbed the "Green Philippine Highway," the project will cover the highway's district influence (Quirino, Isabela and Cagayan. DENR regional executive director Gaudencio Sagubo said they would tap workers from government and nongovernment agencies. He admits red tape may be the project. In Cagayan, the project will cover Claveria, Aparri, Lallo and other towns and Tuguegarao City.

Edmundo Cabral, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

2 cops, militiaman slain

ZAMBOANGA CITY—At least two police officers and a member of the social-cultural organization (OCO) were killed in an ambush by Abu Sayyaf bandits in Barangay Boalan in the town. Sulu police chief Senior Supt. Alvarez Ajirim identified the casualties as SPO2 Alfeng Acosta and SPO2 Alonto Ismael, the district intelligence officer (DIO) members. Three others were injured in the attack, he said. The policemen were on "clearing operations" when they were waylaid. Since Monday, government security forces have been battling Abu Sayyaf bandits under Albader Parad.

Jose J. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

3 killed in Kudarat attack

COTABATO CITY—Four civilians were killed while two other others were injured when unidentified armed men ambushed the Barangay village in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat on July 11. Palimbang Mayor Lotsalin Montenecos said the motive of the attack could be personal rivalry as it happened just a day after a Cotabato official was killed by a member of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit in the area. Montenecos identified the slain victims as Operville dela Cruz and Rodolfo Cabangon, and the injured as Junior Arias and Joseph Ravic. Arias and Ravic are still in critical condition in a hospital here.

Agustin C. Cenit, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Tension in N. Cotabato village

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Tension is rising in a remote village of Magpet, North Cotabato as armed men, identified with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), have allegedly been harassing farmers in the area. The MILF, on the other hand, claimed that North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Pinol told Moro farmers to transfer to Mindanao Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to escape the harassment by alleged settlers to come in. The farmers have called on an international body to monitor the government and MILF ceasefire agreement and intervene in armed skirmishes. Pinol denied the MILF claim, and called for a dialogue. The MILF said the Moro farmers were the original inhabitants of Mindanao but were driven out during the war in the 1970s.

Edwin B. Fabunan, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Reading project in Benguet

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Mayor Nestor Fongwan performed the ceremonial kick-off of Tay's Tale-Days Initiative on Sunday and the Department of Education also weighed in on the job with cost. For about 10 minutes, Fongwan read the English story "The Musicians of Bremen" before amused teachers, Dep'd supervisors and 250 pupils of Pito La. Nursery Central School. "The major's vocal antics and dramatic reading sure smiles have the pupils," said principal Andrea Pawid. The activity formed part of the successful launching of the Dep'd's "Read-A-Thon Project" aimed at bolstering academic of reading level of the country's public elementary schools. The target is for pupils to read at least 15 minutes a day with a minimum 5-minute reading rate either but conducted separately by schools in their areas.

Dexter Cabalza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 electrocuted

LUCENA CITY—Three persons died and 4 others were seriously injured in two separate incidents of electrocution in Quezon province on July 20. Police said a farm laborer was killed and another injured when a high tension wire they were erecting struck a motorcycle.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LIVELIHOOD

Fishermen set out in their daily work on Guimaras Island despite warning weather recently that brought big waves and strong winds. The view of a side of a mountain on the island does not bode well for the stormy weather that these fishermen in their small boat are facing out in the sea.

Suspended Baguio mayor's supporters hold rally

BAGUIO CITY—HUNDREDS OF THE city's old families gathered in downtown's Baguio on Saturday to plead the case of suspended Mayor Braulio Yaranon before Malacañang.

More than 800 residents, mostly vendors, taxpayers and businessmen, and members of militant organizations marched on session Road to protest Yaranon's suspension from "unrepentant politicians and businessmen" who intend "to plunder the city while absence."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, citing a Department of the Interior and Local Government report, ordered Yaranon on June 20 to serve two-six month suspension for a series of administrative orders that encouraged motorists to defy a no parking ordinance being enforced by the Judicial Fire Parking Corp.

It was a Judicial complaint at the DILG that became the basis of Yaranon's suspension.

Yaranon, a retired regional trial court judge, has appealed the order and continues to hold office. But Vice Mayor Reinaldo "Dino Bay" Bautista Jr. took his oath of office as acting mayor on Thursday without relinquishing Yaranon of his duration.

Bautista said he simply complied with Ermita's instructions.

A SUPPORTER looking Baguio Mayor Braulio Yaranon continues to hold office at the City Hall following his suspension for a year for turning against a pay parking firm that he engaged from collecting parking fees and towing vehicles in the city.

Yaranon and Bautista said the oath-taking had crushed their political partnership. In 2004, they ran successfully under the Koalisyon Nosino Kalusugan (KKK) against local administration candidates.

Bautista and Councilor Daniel Farbiu, another KKK member, urged people should blame Jadewell for polarizing the KKK and the city.

Rogelio Tan, Jadewell president, won a 15-year contract to operate computerized pay parking meters in the city in 2003.

The members, however, were relieved to Bautista's recent action when they rallied behind the call of Baguio-Benguet Bishop Carlito Cenzon.

"We were advised not to make any political references to protect the mayor because he did not organize this [march]. This was purely our initiative. This is old Baguio residents who are running our culture," said Salvacion Lupk, an environmental activist.

But militant belonging to the Cordillera Peoples Alliance said the people want the removal of the political base that helped Yaranon, Bautista, Farbiu and other KKK candidates win against the more organized and better-funded Lakas-CMD candidates.

Baguio old-timers carried papers containing signatures that accompanied a petition calling for the junking of the Jadewell contract.

Dozens's group carried streamers that read: "Help us, Madame GMA. Protect us from the evil that is over our streets."

Tan, who watched the protest rally from the sidewalk, conversed with his own banner stating Bayanan Road that read: "Down in Baguio down. Support the cult of law." —Vincent Cabreza, *PDI* Northern Luzon Bureau

'Jueteng,' bookies defeating gov't lottery STL in Quezon

LUCENA CITY—THE GOVERNment's attempt to kill the underworld lottery "jueteng" with a legal form of gambling, the Small Town Lottery, appears to be a failure in Quezon's province as multi-named outlets, called bookies, are undermining STL operations, an STL operator said.

Jose Gonzales, operations manager of Prymetro Corp., said the operation of bookies is causing heavy income from STL.

"If the late collection trend will continue, the revenues that we've been withholding to the provincial government will also be affected," he said in a mobile phone interview.

When asked if there's illegal focus of gambling, the Small Town Lottery, opposite to be a club area in Quezon's province to

LIFE GOES ON

A farmer carries a catch of fish down the slope within the 6-km permanent danger zone around restive Mayon volcano. Some villagers living near the volcano continue with their daily routine while most have heeded warnings to flee ahead of an expected eruption in the coming days.

Bishop: Human life becoming cheap under GMA

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto decried the "rampant disappearing of human rights" in Central Luzon as he led the Catholic Church's social action centers and people's organizations in launching a coalition of defenders of civil, political and economic rights.

Aniceto, whom President Macapagal-Arroyo selected, stepped in her advisory on population and family life programs, called for a "wholistic, deeper faith in God and authentic human development" as he convened on Friday the Central Luzon Human Rights Defender (Defend CL).

"We must have a civilization of love where the dignity of the human person is at the center of our social concern," he said.

Aniceto said he and other bishops in the region, as human rights advocates, would help put in place a "creative, effective, peaceful and tolerant movement to protect and raise the dignity of the people."

The co-conveners are the Citizens Council for Human Rights (CCHR), Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) and Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya (KPD).

Mar de Mesa, CCHR national spokesperson, said social, political, economic, cultural and civil rights in the Philippines are severely under a "coercive environment and culture of impunity." This as the arroyo administration misidentifies progressives in liberalizing the economy and joining the war against terrorism while it is accused of "mass scale graft and corruption."

TFDP reports showed that under the Arroyo administration, there were 1,293 victims of arrest and detention, extra judicial executions, 55; disappearances, 54; incidents of intimidation, 1357; torture victims, 139; and 14 cross-fire casualties.

In Central Luzon, at least 80 activists have been killed since 2001, mostly leaders and members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), its affiliates and party-list groups.

The attacks had been attributed to the military under Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, chief of the 7th Infantry Division. Palparan had denied involvement in the killings.

Dr. Mesa said CCHR reported the human rights situation in the Philippines to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) on July 19 when the Philippines became a member of the body.

"The Philippine government is failing in its obligation to protect human rights," Dr. Mesa said.

He said the Philippine government risks earning "withdrawal of support from the international community of nations" when the situation is tackled by the UNCHR in a meeting in September in Geneva.

Aniceto said he has tallied the attendees of 86 forum on the human rights violations in Central Luzon.

The President, he said, assured him that she has ordered the Philippine National Police to investigate the incidents and institute measures to stop human rights abuses.

Cops present another suspect in radioman's slay

DAVAO CITY—POLICE IN DIGOS City on Friday presented to the media another suspect in the July 18 murder of broadcaster Antonio Ibeto.

But this time, the police said they have more than five detectives of Kapatong Dawao del Sur were the gunmen.

Police Chief Inspector Emerson Lapuebla told reporters during the presentation that Antonio, 35, was positively identified by a witness as the one who shot and killed Ibeto.

Peco, 51, a resident of Sarangay Tres de Mayo in Digos City, was driving his motorcycle along the busy Rizal Avenue in the city when shot several times by one of two motorcycle-riding men today, Aug. 1, 2006, at about 11:05 p.m.

Rizal Avenue is also where many commercial establishments and the Dawao del Sur National High School are.

Chief Insp. Cesar Cabrilas, Digos City police chief, said the perpetrators could have followed Ibeto from the station.

"He was hit thrice. One in the neck and in the left breast just above the heart and in the chest," Cabrilas said.

He said one of the perpetrators even alighted from the motorcycle and fired several more shots at Ibeto, who fell to the concrete pavement.

Cabrilas said when the assassins fled, bystanders picked up Ibeto, popularly known as Bartman, and rushed him to the Davao del Sur provincial hospital where he died some 30 minutes later.

Ibeto regularly criticized politicians and were businessmen for their alleged wrong doings.

He was imprisoned once for killing ex-para chief in connection with a libel case filed by a politician a few years ago. He always bragged that he was the most cool broadcaster with about 99 libel suits.

Lapuebla said Antonmarc, also known as Rangel, was arrested in Digoney town, about 11 km from Digos City on Thursday afternoon.

"He was positively identified by a witness who knows well as to murder the case," he said.

Based on the account of the witness, Antonmarc was one of the two motorcycle-riding men who were trailing Peco on July 18.

The witness, who is now under police custody, said Antonmarc was wearing a cap during the attack and, after shooting Ibeto he casually rushed to the patrol he used.

Lapuebla said the witness' testimony was solid because she personally knew Antonmarc.

But Lapuebla said the police have yet to determine the motive or the mastermind behind Ibeto's death. *Allan A. Austral, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NEWS

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ENVOY'S CALL. US Ambassador Kristie Kenney (left) visits the Dali Training and Recruitment Facility at the PEZA Phase II-Mactan City during a meeting of officials of Business Processing Association of the Philippines member-companies. The meeting included discussion on promoting the country further as a global leader in the business processing outsourcing and IT-enabled industries. (Bert Nuevas-Recession Director Penny Bongato-right) shows Kenney around.

War in Lebanon claims its first Filipino casualty

By Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A DOMESTIC HELPER FROM Barangay Singcang in this city became the first known Filipino casualty of the raging conflict in the Middle East. She was wounded in Lebanon where fighting between the Israelis and the Hezbollah guerrillas broke out last week.

Nasaidar Carreon, who works for a Lebanese family in Beirut, called her sister Rosanna on Monday to tell her she had been injured on the right arm and has been confined at the Al-Sipan Hospital in Lebanon for three days, according to officer-in-charge Jeff Espenocasin of the Bacolod City Office of Second Concerns.

Espenocasin said he was informed that Nasaidar's female employers was also injured in the big fray but they had no idea how it happened.

However, Espenocasin said, when Nasaidar's family contacted her Lebanese employers, identified as Hanin Youssef Fadhat, the latter denied that Nasaidar was working for him.

Negroenses divided

Espenocasin said his office had informed the Department of Foreign Affairs Operations Center in Manila that Nasaidar was in a hospital and that the Dawes then forwarded data about her to the Philippine Embassy in Beirut.

Negroenses in Lebanon are divided over whether to come home or not—with some fearing for their lives and others saying they were living away from danger areas and wanted to continue to work there, said Espenocasin, quoting information from the OWFs families here.

Joy Lopez, whose wife Marijoris works as a domestic helper in Beirut, said he talked to her yesterday and she told him that she was scared and wanted to come home but her employer would not let her leave.

Sounds of bombing

Lopez said Marijoris told him she was in the second floor of her employers, about the house among those flattened.

"But as I talked to her I could hear the sound of bombings. Even I was scared," he said.

Raymund Bordales, who talked to his wife Shelba, 25, said she told him she was safe and that she was staying with her employer in their residential suburb house.

Shelba has been working in Lebanon as a domestic helper for two years and has no plans to come home.

2 daughters

A resident Talisa Quilatre of La Carlota City, whose two daughters are working in Lebanon, was weeping yesterday when she arrived at the capitol to make her phone call. She was able to reach her daughters, who assured her that they were safe and did not want to come home.

Quilatre said her daughters—Gracia, 27, and Rina, 24, told her they were far from the fighting although they could hear airplanes flying overhead.

Palace to Drilon: Help, don't talk

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG TESTIFIED YET BACK AT Senate President Franklin Drilon for his "panicking comments" at a time when the government was faced with the problem of ensuring the safety of 30,000 Filipinos stranded in Lebanon.

The Palace was reacting to Drilon's statement holding the P1.5-billion the government had set aside for the evacuation of the OFWs, after the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) had P7.4-billion in cash reserves.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said in a briefing: "We don't mind them but are just can't help but notice that they constantly create our work, prejudging controversy, instead of helping us out. I hope they stop some and think about the crisis facing our fellow countrymen in the Middle East."

Defensor was more open to the concerns raised by Fr. Ignacio Ishiwata, the lone Filipino priest in Lebanon, because he "is very neutral and he's not malicious." Ishiwata, who opened his church to evacuees, in an interview with the reporters had questioned the way the government was spending the resources it had for the evacuation effort, and wondered what had happened to the extra money collected from the OFWs.

Yesterday, Ishiwata clarified his statement and said he had never complained that the government was limiting its financial assistance for the evacuation effort but that he merely expressed the hope that the funds set aside by the government would be used wisely.

"They are consistently pessimistic and negative instead of just helping us out. As a priest, they can always call on Dawes and ask them where are the funds, how much have been allocated," Defensor said. He said the Dawes funds were for the use of all OFWs all over the world and not just those in Lebanon.

"This is why we have to use it wisely and equitably," Defensor said. With a report from Cynthia D. Balana

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Landmark could face fate of demolished historical buildings

New investors key to preserving the old Manila Times office

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE NAME FLORENTINO TORRES IS SO famous it deserves dating back to the first decade of the 20th century. During that period, the diarchate (landed elite) ranks were split between those who continued to agitate for independence, and those who were for annexation with the United States.

Torres belonged to the latter group as he was a member of the pro-American Federal Party. In 1907, the Americans rewarded him by appointing him to the Supreme Court. An editor-lawyer came later, in the form of a loquacious ex-Sec. Cruz, Manila, near Gumacoers, named after Kenya.

A visit to the much-changed Florentino Torres Street today inevitably brings back a flood of memories. I had worked for the Associated Press' Manila bureau way back in the 1960s. The offices of the AP were located on the third floor of a rather gloomy building owned by the Roces family. Then radio station dzBB was on the fourth floor.

One building over right beside the Manila Times, also Roces-owned. Before the dictator Ferdinand Marcos imposed martial law in 1972, the Manila Times was the leading national newspaper. (Then came the Manila Chronicle, the Philippines Herald and the Manila Daily Bulletin.)

A passageway connected our office to the Manila Times building, at one time known as the TPT (Tribune-Le Temps de Manille) Building. We AP staffers would sometimes hurry back to the Times canteen. If we were lucky, we would see journalistic icons like Chino Roces, Joe Rosales and Joe Luis Carson holding forth in their desk fiefdoms.

The writer friends who also worked there in one of the departments of the newspaper, and I recall interviewing her about her short stories, including "A Fairy Tale for the City" which was considered "obscene" by the guardians of morality at that time. The interview was for a term paper assigned by professor Bienvenido Lumbera (now a National Artist).

Modern, sleek design

Soon again today after the passing of the decades, the old Times building at Florentino can no "modern" and sleek, light in color, with geometric lines and big glass panes. There are five stories, with the penthouse having space for a party, no exception. It was a helipad, actually.

The building holds it, "our" building, now seems to me more Old World and therefore very attractive, although it is a bona-fide

LUMBERA, p. 2

THE OLD Manila Times building in Sta. Cruz, Manila. [illegible]

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RP's first woman crane operator stands tall in man's world

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN A WORLD OF METAL MACHINES and men, a 30-year-old woman has made her mark.

Merle Lee Sumaoang-Sui is the first and probably only woman in the country certified to operate the 17.6-ton Rubber Tire Gantry (RTG) crane that is as high as a three-storey building. It picks up cargo containers from trucks and piles them in neat designated rows.

Sumaoang-Sui is an operations supervisor of the International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) in Manila, Manila, the only port facility in the country that receives and dispatches international cargo.

"I didn't really know that I was the first until they told me. For me, the reason that I wanted to undergo the training was just to list as a business supervisor, to be a more efficient supervisor to my people. That's all that I wanted," said Sumaoang-Sui, who has been working for ICTSI for five years now.

After graduating with a degree in marine transportation at the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy in Antipolo, Rizal, Sumaoang-Sui applied for a job at the company which—because of the nature of the work it is involved in—usually prefers the less fairer sex.

"Do you know that we are only looking for male crane operators? Are you sure? How do you know that you can do it?" she recalled an ICTSI officer asking her during her job interview in 2000.

"Well sir, in my opinion, the only difference between men and women is that men are muscular up," she told him.

Sumaoang-Sui is also determined not to have overturned the ICTSI official because not only was she hired, she has been given jobs that in the past were only designated to men.

From checking machines to be received, Sumaoang-Sui was also placed in charge of taking care of working ships and ensuring that they were safely and properly berthed. She was also once given the task of managing cargo operations at the 10-hectare Manila Intermodal Container Terminal (MICT). Right now, the beautiful mother of two continues not only to be trained on these RTG cranes but also has the honor of being one of the pool of port equipment operators who could step in case of a manpower shortage.

The program allowed the company's ranking officers to choose from several heavy equipment. The forklift, the RTG, the stacker (a machine that arranges containers onto stacks up to four levels high) or the quay crane, the largest port equipment which picks up containers from ships berthed at the piers.

Sumaoang-Sui was really anxious employee who signed up for the two-week program. After a day of orientation, she found herself in a cramped seventh floor hut on her head, carefully climbing the narrow steps leading toward the RTG and trying not to be overwhelmed by a machine that was as tall as a three-story building.

After hours of training from no-nonsense RTG operators, Sumaoang-Sui quickly learned how to carefully lift a container from a truck and place it onto a stack by moving the machine's wheels — all from within the RTG cabin which had a comfortable glass floor.

"What always came to my mind was that this was the most expensive thing I've ever driven on wheels. It must be more expensive than any luxury vehicle," she added with a slight chuckle.

Sumaoang-Sui has since graduated to supervising operations at the ICTSI's empty container depot, a position where her passion has taken her from the day to-many hundreds her supervision was there to open to men.

Being in a male-dominated workplace has been a blast for Sumaoang-Sui who would however carry a traumatic second name—Lee—because of a facility akin-sized wedding that told her partner they were going to have a baby boy.

"The usual thinking at the time of my nursing was that I was probably not straight." But that's not the case. I still like one of my nails and I try to take care of my skin, all the normal girl things" she said.

More than two years after she undertook the port equipment operations training at the ICTSI, no other women as the term, may has yet to follow in her footsteps.

"I have been trying to encourage my female colleagues and I've been telling them that they could do the same, but I think they're afraid of making mistakes. But you are allowed to make mistakes. It just takes training," Sumaoang-Sui said.

PHOTO BY Lee Sumaoang-Sui, the first certified woman operator of the Rubber Tire Gantry crane which towers above her.

Atienza says aide has not left country

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE CHIEF OF THE WESTERN METRO Manila Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) yesterday said that they have been considering only the weekend to verify if Jose Noli Sagun, the special assistant of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza who allegedly shot to death a jaywalker driver in Manila, has pending warrants of arrest.

"We have been instructed via other but never immediately if we obtain a valid warrant of arrest against Sagun," Senior Supt. Wilfredo Cruz said in a phone interview.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, on the other hand, belied unconfirmed reports that Sagun has left the country.

"I would not allow that to happen," Atienza stressed. "I hope he has not said or do that because that would only show he is guilty."

ALL THE TEARS: Some are yesterday after days of emotional restraint, a man reads tributes to the friends in this weekend by laying out to dry a Hugo gift of pictures bags. The bags will later be sold to recycling companies. [illegible]

Two of five escaped prisoners recovered

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TWO OF THE FIVE ESCAPEES WHO broke out of the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa City were found dead Friday.

The NBP inmates who engineered yesterday's jailbreak that left two jail guards and Inmate Edwin Ongcoy dead, were given about the incident.

The body of Valentino, on the other hand, was found by bicycle delivery undertaken a tree some 200 meters away from the south gate of the medium-security compound.

Ongcoy was shot dead in Bilibid, Bureau, Cavite by a jail guard identified as Inmate Rachel Ibis other details were

Hardly expert said Valentino could have been hit when the jailguards opened fire on the escaping inmates.

The Inmates tried to get more details about the recovery of the two prisoners but Theresa Vincente, Bureau of Corrections director, did not respond to phone calls.

Landmark could face fate of demolished historical buildings

To page A17

shell, totally abandoned, with shelved window frames and missing or broken glass panes. There are other spaces to be let on every floor of the seven-storey building. It packs up energy consumers from trades and pilot chairs once assigned there.

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Tax incentives for landowners

Delchan said Manotoc's approach was "never enlightening," adding: "It's sad that there is no law or tax incentive to make it easier for these landowners to preserve their heritage structures. The government should give tax incentives to these landowners."

Yang Bing Yuan, Manotoc's father, had threatened of converting the old Times building into an institution for "the welfare of teachers, a pool of scientists and artists, families eating in the open or a combination of teachers ..."

Manotoc could like to turn this idea into reality although it is rather skeptical, "and there are also parts of the buildings eye to the next generation." In the meantime, the fate of this Manila landmark remains uncertain although the Plaza Fair president indicates he wants to hold on to it indefinitely.

"Architecture students can tour the building it's the work," he said.

Those who want to look around this old Manila Times building can call Ayan or Gillian at 733-8421 for information.

MALACAÑANG

By the President of the Philippines

Proclamation No.

Declaring Sunday, July 23, 2006 as Philippine Flag Day

WHEREAS, the Philippine flag is a symbol of sovereignty and independence of the Philippines and of the Filipino people;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 8491 mandates that the Philippine flag shall be displayed at all times, including inclement weather, in front of every building and public institution;

WHEREAS, the Philippine flag is a symbol of the unity of the Filipino people and of their love for country;

WHEREAS, the Philippine flag is a symbol of the public and private institutions, and of the individuals and organizations;

WHEREAS, the 12th anniversary of the Philippine flag is a symbol of [illegible]

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby proclaim Sunday, July 23, 2006 as Philippine Flag Day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines to be affixed.

Done in the City of Manila, this [illegible] day of July in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Six.

By the President:

[illegible]
Executive Secretary

PHILIPPINES - JAPAN Friendship
フィリピン・日本 友好年

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MALACAÑANG PALACE

I would like to convey our warm congratulations to the Government of Japan on the occasion of the Philippines-Japan Friendship year 2006 in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan.

In support of our commemoration of this milestone, I have issued Proclamations No. 834 and 905 declaring 23 July 2006 as Philippines-Japan Friendship Day and year 2006 as Philippines-Japan Friendship Year.

Through the various events and activities being organized throughout 2006, we seek to highlight the long standing friendship and cooperation between the Philippines and Japan. We also look forward to seeing a more strengthened and expanded ties manifested in increased exchanges in trade, culture and tourism and people-to-people interaction.

I wish Japan and the Japanese people all the best. May our celebration of the Friendship Year 2006 bring peace, progress and prosperity to our two countries and peoples.

Mabuhay.

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Prime Minister
Japan

On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I extend my warmest greetings as we celebrate today the Philippines-Japan Friendship Day.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan. Our partnership is based on the shared values, and it has become a cornerstone of the peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

I sincerely hope that this strong partnership will continue to flourish in the years ahead.

Mabuhay!

Junichiro Koizumi
Prime Minister of Japan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Japan

It is a great pleasure to extend my personal greetings as we celebrate the Philippines-Japan Friendship Day today.

The Philippines and Japan, as true friends in East Asia, have deepened cordial relations for the past 50 years, and our cooperation has become a significant element to bolster regional stability and development.

I am confident that this Philippines-Japan Friendship Year will be an excellent opportunity to advance our bilateral relationship, thus bringing further prosperity of both countries.

Mabuhay!

Taro Aso
Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Embassy of Japan
Manila

I feel very honored to celebrate the Philippines-Japan Friendship Day with the Filipino and the Japanese people in the Philippines. Today we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the normalization of the diplomatic relations between our two countries, and I attribute our excellent and ever expanding relations to the collective efforts of our two peoples based on our shared values of democracy, freedom, and respect for human rights.

We have already concluded quite a number of successful commemorative events since the start of the Friendship Year. They are the products of the joint collaboration between our two peoples encompassing diverse fields of human endeavors, such as theater, music, Noh, symbiotic dance, paintings, photographs, academic exchanges, science and technology, development of human resources, debates and so on and so forth. More many events are scheduled, and I am confident that the Philippines-Japan Friendship Day and the Philippines-Japan Friendship Year will deepen our friendship and mutual understanding, thereby further broadening our spheres of cooperation toward a more dynamic partnership in the new millennium.

Mabuhay! Isang bansa!

Ryuichiro Yamazaki
Ambassador

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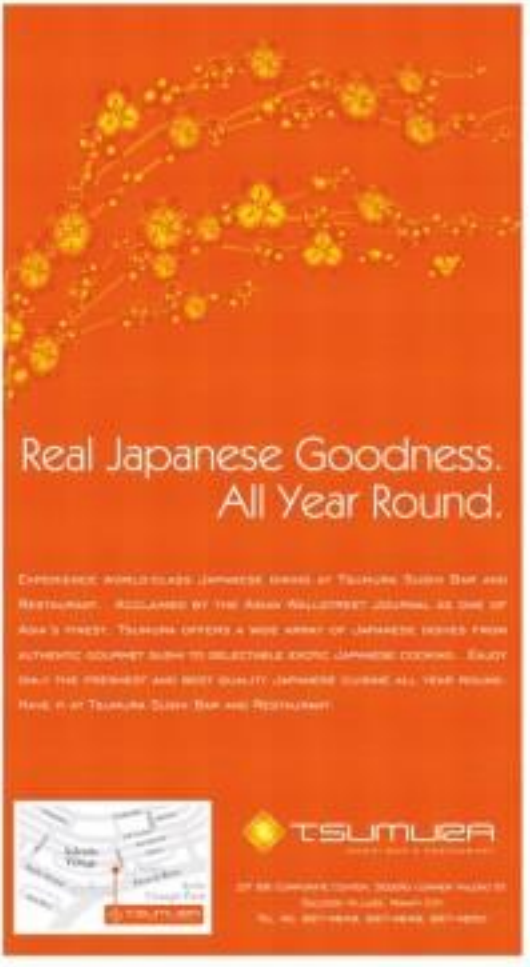
Philippines – Japan Ties

Since 1868, diplomatic contacts between the Philippines and Japan has been established. Hence, Japan established its first diplomatic office in Manila which was then upgraded to a consulate-general in 1919 to maintain consular matters of Japanese immigrants in Davao and Mindanao.

In 1941, the consular office was declared an embassy under the wartime 2nd republic. After the reparation agreement were signed by both countries, Japan formally established its embassy in Manila on July 23, 1956. The First Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines was Ambassador Kenichi Yasuoka while the ambassador of the Philippines to Japan was Ambassador Felino Neri.

Over the years, Japan continues to open its doors to the Philippines. The ties between the two countries continue to grow and deepen. The Japanese celebrates their full support for the entire country. The government grant scholarships for Filipinos to study in their country. The Embassy in the Philippines opened a one-stop shop website, for new access to visa application forms, scholarships, grant assistance, and general inquiries. Friendship societies have been constantly increasing in number. Schools and universities offering Japanese language courses are improving. While intermarriages of Filipinos and Japanese bridged the gap between the two cultures.

Up to this day, Japan continues to make contributions to the improvement of the infrastructures, agriculture, technology and in almost every basic human needs of the Filipino which clearly manifests the strong cooperation between the Philippines and Japan.



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
GLOBAL Pinoy
Edited by Sherry Lirio
SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2006

This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, at construction sites and in the homes of the world, and whenever work can be contracted to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

Pinoys cook, serve sushi in Cyprus

By Sherry V. Quiaoarnido

LARNACA, CYPRUS—THE foreign guests across the table could only stare in awe as the chef on the teppan ahlanza—a fiery opening for a nightly show in this Japanese restaurant seemingly out of place on a strip of fish taverns and Greek diners by the Mediterranean sea.

With a magician's sleight of hand, he tossed an egg from his left hand, caught it from behind by his right, cracked it open and then dropped its contents onto a pile of cooked rice he had spread on the stove.

As if holding a pair of matchsticks, he then juggled the salt and pepper shakers before sprinkling some onto the dish, and mixed the ingredients deftly with silky flicks of flaming scalded beef.

Finally, he scooped the steamy dish onto small bowls and served it to his anxious guests.

Guests surprised

"It's fried rice!" the surprised guests said one by one.

In this exquisite dinner scene providing suitable for thousands of foreign nationals flocking into Larnaca, an all-Filipino crew of chefs and waiters seem worlds away from conflict, on the job as usual in Russian-owned Sakura Japanese Restaurant. "Sakura" means cherry in many yang nga gusto. Mirusia magnasa pang nakikipagsapalaran sa Cyprus, Makaki-chiefs ang pinoy sa restoran na kasi [They are really delighted with it. Sometimes there are guests who would dance with us. We get really flattered whenever they applaud us]," said 20-year-old Ferdie Lamza, a pioneering chef at the restaurant opened a year and two months ago.

Lamza, three other chefs and a pair of waiters prepare and serve sushi, sapporoshi, teriyaki and tempura with Pinoy flavor and flair in this Japanese restaurant on Larnaca's Oberhofen Road, forming the core of breathable hands bolstering with tourists from around Europe in the peak of the summer season.

Who's lonely

More than just giving traditional service, the Pinoy crew render a performance for mostly British, Russian and Cypriot guests Monday through Saturday, armed with chicken liver knives and flaming oil.

And just like millions of Filipinos driven out of the country by the need to provide for their families, these six Filipinos braved life in this island country to once what they could not back home.

Francis made it a habit that I remind him the Philippines as a cook in a Japanese restaurant... where I earned P9,000. But it's not enough.

"I need to send home for my family and my children," said Lito Gomez, 33, who left behind his wife and two children in his native Pangasinan.

"It's a two-edged sword, it's just Lito's sister-adjustment. When I feel homesick, I just call home weekly, sometimes twice weekly. But my situation here is much better," said Gomez, who earns $800 (Dh3,536) a month.

Free board and lodging

Gomez was recruited four months ago as part of the new batch of Pinoy cooks hired by the restaurant, along with Sharon Dejit's Marcos Cisneros, 28, and Ruben delos Cinco of Bicol, but 33.

They joined chef Lamza, a native of San Juan, Metro Manila, and waiters Jolanie and Cecille Hassanie, a married couple from Davao Oriental, to complete the restaurant's staff which had been depleted when coworkers from Lithuania, England and Cyprus decided to leave.

While compatriots working together, doing the jobs of each has never been better.

"Our teamwork is better. Sometimes, we just look at each other and are already understand what we mean, so it's better for our service," said Larnaca, speaking in Filipino.

Their employer, Russian Vladimir Kusurov, would only agree. "If they are good for me, then I am good for them. Because together, we make business. They make money for me, I give money to them," said Kusurov, who had invested in the Philippines early last year in search of good deals for his restaurant.

Discipline as value

Besides the monthly pay, Kusurov gives the staff free meals and provides them housing from apartment just a short walk away from the restaurant.

Giving high value to discipline, the Russian employer kept reasonable distance from his staff—a no-nonsense manner too many-sides in the kitchen. He had fired one Filipino chef last year for coming to work drunk twice despite his warning.

"I was a coach of a football team. And I know what discipline means.

"For example there's an important game because one tomorrow, then before the day I cannot drink anything, I'm thinking of my job," Kusurov explained.

Asked whether the current crisis has caused him problems, Kusurov replied: "No, knocks on wood. They are funny, we make some jokes."

'I don't shout at them'

"I don't shout at them, because they do not give me problems. I am good to them, I am not high up here, and they are not down there. We are the same ... I like it, how they make the show, how they serve," he said.

For the staff meanwhile, it's all a matter of hanging on.

"For me, I would try to last here because life back home is so hard. Both are children still in school," said Cortes. Besides, he said, the hours could be eased by sitting at the nearby beach and watching the Cyprus sunset, as the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean seem home in the shore.

WHAT A HOT Russian businessman Vladimir Kusurov owns the Japanese restaurant along a strip of fish taverns in Larnaca, Cyprus that serves sushi, sampura, teppanyaki, and teriyaki prepared by an all-Filipino kitchen crew, from left, waiter Arlenie Macusto, and chefs Enrico Larosa, Ruben dela Cruz, Marcos Cisneros and Lito Cortes. INQ

They're not just chefs and waiters but performers who wow mostly British, Russian and Cypriot guests six nights a week

Why 'Mr. Suave' look is 'in' among OFWs in the Middle East

By Gan S. Camacho
Contributor

EVER WONDERED WHY ALMOST EVERY male OFW from the Middle East does you meet often sports a mustache?

From your occasional "this" who works in Dubai up to the photos of your classmate's dad or uncle in Saudi, male OFWs from the Middle East almost always have their "Mr. Suave" thing going on.

Under the Jeddah Rules, the OFW character in Ed Mendoza Jr.'s Pugad Baboy wasn't meant to be the kind boss that he is without wearing his facial hair in the classic shape.

The burning subject Middle East OFWs from all over on how and why the "Mr. Suave" look appears to be the "in" thing among our compatriots working in the Middle East and this is what we found out:

"The mustache, in Arab countries, is a symbol of masculinity," shares Eduardo Supico, a company supervisor and resident of Saudi Arabia for ten years. "It's an Arab's way of showing how manly he is. So, if you are not a man if you don't wear a mustache," says Joyson Santos, a former company driver in Jeddah.

But is being a testimony to one's manhood the only purpose for growing a patch of facial hair in the Middle East? The Joyson's and Eduardo's would probably turn out that choosing up-outside in the Middle East without a beard or a mustache is one way of getting unsolicited and indecent proposals from gays or even "straights" Arabs.

"In my experience, let Saudi, if you don't wear a mustache," says Freddie Gutierrez, a former OFW who spent more than 10 years in Saudi Arabia for seven years from 1986 to 1992, "people will think that you're queer and worse, you'll get propositioned by gay Arabs. You're not a real man if you don't grow a mustache. The Arabs will actually have this notion that men likely you are only in between."

"When I first went to Saudi in 1986, I didn't grow my mustache yet. During my first stay in the jail cell of Abha General Hospital, the whole three thought I was gay. I got treated because I didn't have a cut hair," he adds.

"It gets worse if you are fair-skinned," shares Joyson Santos.

Mistaken for a gay

One day while walking on his way to a basketball court in Jeddah with a freshly shaven face, an Arab driving a luxury car stopped beside the sidewalk and motioned Santos to get near him. Curious as to what the guy wanted from him, Santos approached the Arab and got the shock of his life. Without blinking, the guy to the car asked Santos if he was available and if he would take him home.

"I was so surprised and furious at the same time," he continues. "In my age, I looked like gay closet. He quickly drove away after seeing my reaction."

A former flight attendant in Kuwait says that the "bigoldyo" phenomenon is not confined in Saudi alone. "It's the same in other Arab countries. Many Arabs are sexually aggressive and it doesn't matter even if you're a guy. A clean shaven face and hair also make you an appealing prospect for those guys because you look more feminine."

He adds that getting propositioned by an Arab doesn't mean that that particular Arab is gay all the way. "From what I have seen and heard, make are usually aggressive and have an qualms about sleeping with men. Maybe it's the high price of prostitutes there or the great amount of trouble for an Arab once go through before marrying. Divorces can be very expensive you know."

Defense vs harass

On the other hand, Bey Bejo, a former resident of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia for almost years believes that it would be an earning too far to say that OFWs grow their mustaches as a defense mechanism against homosexual advances.

"Reaching an iyon. Every nag-supply man (as a defense mechanism), to certain circumstances lang. Gyimpot versus... I mean pero halimaw ito ng buding kaya nagpapogi-mukha iyan."

Bejo admits that one get touched and talked gay if one doesn't grow a mustache but he offers another explanation behind the custom.

"Mukhain ringgit ng mga Arabo sa Pinoy [ang kapag nag-pinoy ay pagpapa-arabo tila ng bigote ay nakakatulong din somehow para ma-elevate status nila kasi nagmumukha silang Arabo. Bentig nera na rin kasi sa mga Arabo ang pagpapamisi ng bigote."

Baby Bailes, another former Saudi resident, provides an additional perspective on the figure current with her narrative of how her brother's practice in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Looking like 'Pietrawa'

"My older brother, Matthew, likes to grow his facial hair thick and long like the local Muslimans. Arab leaders known for their bravery and masculinity. They are recognized through their thick, long facial hair so my brother thinks it would be cool and 'macho' if he looks like a Muslimans."

Dr. FIN Demetrio III, professor of philosophy and Philippine studies in San Beda College, believes that mustache growing in the Middle East is developed into a norm, not only for Arabs, but for OFWs as well.

"Everybody is encouraged to engage in the practice of growing facial hair and there are sanctions for not conforming. Pinoys who don't grow mustaches are teased. Mockery is one form of punishment for not conforming," he says.

This norm, like most norms, has a functional characteristic if you take a closer look at the explanations of its origin provided by OFWs, he adds.

"Let's take for example, the defense-mechanism against homosexuals explanation. The mustache of gay-masculine for male OFWs serves as a protection, a device to ward off sexual assaults from homosexuals."

"On the other hand, the explanation that shows Filipinos emulating Arab customs and fashion to achieve equal status with the superior race of Arabs may also be interpreted to a passive situation perspective. When two groups coexist in one society and one of the groups is more powerful, the weaker group tends to imitate the practices of the stronger group," he adds.

The steady growth of OFWs working in the Middle East throughout the years has also contributed to the local recognition of this mustache-growing tradition.

"Whenever I see a Pinoy wearing black whiskers, I quickly have this impression that the guy is from Saudi or some country in the Middle East," says Lee De Vera, a Pinoy who is now a resident of the United States. "I am also entertained if he is dark-skinned and wears tons of bling bling," he adds.

Pugad Baboy

Even Pugad Baboy's Bailes, Pugad Baboy's father, Tatang Pugad, is not an exception to the "Mr. Suave" image." Asked if Bailes wouldn't be Bailes without the mustache, Del Mendoza Jr., creator of Pugad Baboy and a former Saudi OFW as well, gave a positive reply.

"Ugat yata nyo'h dumito ang isa't isa. Si pamilya lyong mustasyado ang isang bagi hindi nabubuhay ng mga Arabo."

For Jake Pitas, a local media endorser and who by no means has ever stepped on the sandy lands of Arabia, the rising image of the mustached OFW can never be worse. With his think liquor and dark skin, he always manages to fool people into believing that he's an OFW.

"Whenever I go to night clubs or bars," he says, "my friends would always tell the people there that I am a nanamong OFW from Iraq. The waiters and the girls would suddenly become nicer and more attentive, thinking that I'm there to throw money on them." With reports from Freddie Lee Anne M. Gutierrez

BOYS WILL BE BOYS: Joe Sevilla, Freddie Gutierrez and Abe Ledesma sport a mustache that not only complements their roles, but also keep them out of harm's way.

Bitter election fight over leftist splits Mexico

MEXICO CITY—THE FIGHT OVER MEXICO's outcomed presidential election is widening a deep political divide and turning many until the leftist candidate denounced by foes as a cunning firm would be backlashed in the streets by huge crowds of followers.

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a fiery left-winger who narrowly lost the July 2 presidential election, says the vote was rigged against him and he is demanding Mexico's highest electoral court oversee the tally.

A former soldier officer for Indians in the southern state of Tabasco, Lopez Obrador announced to thousands of supporters at a speech last weekend he would launch a campaign of peaceful civil resistance to pressure the court.

"You want civil war!" a full-page ad on Wednesday in one newspaper this week, screamed to Lopez Obrador. The ad, placed by what appeared to be a private citizen, accused the leftist of treason and stoking "to divide and bleed a people that is united and at peace." A cartoon in the Reforma newspaper pictured Lopez Obrador as the heroic movie doll Chucky wearing a Nazi swastika armband and wielding an axe.

On the other side, posters portraying conservative Felipe Calderon as a Nazi are showing up in Mexico City's subway and a group of people harassed him as he left a meeting with trade union leaders earlier this week.

The election split Mexico between left and right, giving Calderon a victory of some 243,000 votes, or 0.6 percentage point, over Lopez Obrador.

The leftist, 52, challenged Calderon on Friday to accept a vote-by-vote recount of ballots and promised to keep up massive street protests if the court did not call a recount.

"If they violate citizens' rights, if there is a setback to democracy, are we going to sit here with our arms crossed?" he said. "Are we going to put up with a privileged group shredding what is going to be presidential?"

Two huge tents rallies in the past two weeks in favor of Lopez Obrador have been peaceful but leftists hurled insults at Calderon and hanged on his car on Tuesday in the first sign protests could turn ugly.

Lopez Obrador refused to condemn the incident, although he has frequently urged supporters to be peaceful.

The son of financially-struggling shopkeepers, he has long harbored a vision of leftist-style populism and a fierce opposition to privatization, in the 1980s in Tabasco.

Alarmed by what they see as Lopez Obrador's confrontational style, Mexico's business elite and foreign investors have rallied around Calderon, a former energy minister who has promised to open the state-run oil industry to more private investment.

Calderon has also vowed to continue the free market reforms of President Vicente Fox, who is barred from seeking reelection.

Lopez Obrador has promised to increase welfare spending for the poor, raise the minimum wage and review energy contracts with foreign companies.

Calderon has said he will not change the constitution to allow foreign companies to own Mexican oil reserves, but has left the door open to allowing them to sign risk contracts to help develop new fields.

Lopez Obrador has also promised to review a controversial free trade deal with the United States and Canada, which he says has failed to help Mexico's poor farmers.

Calderon has said he will not renegotiate the deal, but has promised to help farmers by investing in rural infrastructure.

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Somali Islamists declare jihad vs Ethiopia

MOGADISHU—SOMALIA'S POWERFUL Islamic council on Friday issued a "holy war" against neighboring Ethiopia, which has moved troops into its broken neighboring state to protect its weak transitional government from a feared Islamist advance.

And as hundreds of people demonstrated in the capital in support of the Islamists, hardline Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys said Somalia will not condone further incursions from Ethiopia.

"The Somali people have to fight against Ethiopia, this is a holy war in which we are defending our country," Aweys said on a nationwide radio broadcast, speaking from his native Galgadud region in central Somalia.

"The Ethiopians have invaded our country and we must force them out of the country and this will be a holy war of Jihad," added Aweys, who is the supreme leader of Supreme Islamic Council of Somalia (SICS).

Aweys is a hardline cleric designated a terrorist by the United States for suspected links to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network.

The Islamists, who have taken control of the capital Mogadishu and much of southern Somalia, have demanded the immediate withdrawal of Ethiopian who accused Islamic extremists are near military victory in the interethnic, the seat of the transitional government, overnight.

"The Somali people are ready to defend themselves from the acts of aggression by Ethiopia," said Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, chair of the executive committee of the SICS. AFP

ROOTS OF CHILDHOOD
Ron Weinberg, 3rd sport hero casts the sand at D-Hour Beach while raising the Oregon Coast July 21. At left, an unidentified South African boy with his face caked in white from day, now has dusting his attention to manhood. During the process he will learn his family home no base for himself with fellow soldiers at which time they are circumcised and face the chemistry of nature. The blankets are used to ward off the cold as they rumble around overflow for women.

Europe heat wave kills 31, melts roads

PARIS—EUROPEANS WERE BEING urged to stay cool Friday as a record breaking heatwave that has melted roads, purged power and killed 31 people across half the continent looked set to last another week.

In France, medical authorities said 22 people have now died from the heat—up from nine two days ago. They include a child of 15 months, four laborers and two homeless people.

The upheaval count brought to 31 the number of people who are believed to have died since the start of the week in western Europe, including two new victims reported in Spain.

The Health General Bureau of Statistics (CDH) said there was a rise of 168 in the number of deaths in the first week of July above the average—which it said was linked to the heatwave.

"This does not mean that those people were killed by the heat. But if someone has a particular cardiovascular or breathing problem, their heat can be a trigger," said CDH director Carl Hermann.

French forecasters placed the eastern half of the country on "orange" alert—the second highest level—warning of more peaks at the weekend. Temperatures were expected to reach 39 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit) in the Rhone valley.

The state-run Meteo-France weather centre advised the public to keep windows and shutters closed during the day and allow air indoors only at night. People should shower frequently, drink 1.5 liters of water a day and spend three hours a day in an air-conditioned environment like a cinema, it said.

With concern growing that there could be a repeat of the deadly 2003 heatwave that killed 15,000 in France and more than 35,000 in Europe as a whole, a government committee was appointed to meet every Thursday and hear the latest from the health and meteo services.

Temperatures in Britain came off the boil Friday but were still hot, with forecasters expecting a mercury 32° C.

The mercury was slightly down from Wednesday—which saw the hottest July day on record—but weather forecasters predicted another heatwave next week. AFP

3 Brits tied to Enron case told to remain in America

HOUSTON—THREE BRITISH BANKERS embroiled in the United States fast week to face Enron-related fraud charges will not be allowed to return to Britain before their trial, which, their lawyers, said could mean months if not years away from home.

Magistrate Judge Stephen W. Smith of US District Court said Friday that David Bermingham, Giles Darby and Gary Mulgrew must remain within his jurisdiction in the Houston area and post a combined $3 million bond. The ruling came despite impassioned pleas from the defense that this represented an unfair hardship.

The three men are accused of conspiring with Enron's former chief financial officer, Andrew S. Fastow, to enrich themselves at the expense of their employer, NatWest Bank, now part of Royal Bank of Scotland. The indictment, charging them with fraud, says that they made $7.5 million in the scheme. Their case has caused a storm of protest in Britain over the fairness of its extradition treaty with the United States.

Smith, in explaining his ruling, said that the men "were a flight risk" and that his authority "ends at the water's edge." He said the defendants must surrender their passports and will not be allowed to travel within the United States.

Moreover, he said, the Britons will not be allowed to live together to deter opportunities. Prosecutors had argued that this would allow them to "craft their stories." AFP

Mahathir taunts PM, vows to go on fighting him

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—FORmer Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad lambasted Saturday his survey on a fight against the governments he calls incompetent and gutless, and accused his successor of ruining science.

Mahathir, 81, returned Saturday from a European vacation to a welcome more befitting an opposition leader than a retired statesman. After he slighted from a private jet, some 500 supporters greeted him with cheers and banners that read "Mahathir, Save Malaysia" and "Mahathir Restore Our Country's Pride."

Many in the crowd, which included former Cabinet opponents and ruling United Malays National Organization party members, wore T-shirts with his picture on the front.

Addressing the crowd, Mahathir said he didn't expect such a reception. He said now that he has retired for 23 days he will continue his fight against Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the man he had hand-picked to lead Malaysia.

"That man is afraid of me," he said. "What is he afraid of? If you think what you did is right, then why are you afraid?" he told his cheering supporters.

Mahathir, who retired in 2003 after 22 years in office as Malaysia's longest-serving leader, has launched blistering verbal attacks on Abdullah in recent weeks for allowing him of mishandling the economy and national interests. Analysts say he is upset his successor appears to have tarnished his legacy.

"Already the country is not doing well. Already we have lost respect, especially among the developing world," said Mahathir, standing on the back seat of a four-wheel drive vehicle. his head sticking out through the sunroof, outside before a support terminal until he chartered and special flights.

Mahathir's chief annoyances include abandon's decision to forsake several large projects that he started or proposed, including a bridge between Malaysia and Singapore. AP

MAHATHIR

HITLER CHOPT
Adolf Hitler, center, poses with architect Albert Speer, left, and sculptor Arno Breker in Paris in a June 23, 1940 photo. Works by sculptor Breker, favored by the Nazis, went on display Friday amid controversy over his links to Hitler. AP

Woman draws 40 years in Brazil slay case

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL—A WEALTHY young woman, her lover and his brother were found guilty and sentenced to nearly 40 years in prison each Thursday in the brutal killing of her parents—a crime that fascinated Brazil with a tale of love across rigid class lines.

A jury of four men and three women convicted heiress Ana Richthofen, her lover Daniel Cruz and Cruz's brother Cristian in the killing of Manfred and Marisia von Richthofen as they slept at home in a wealthy district of Sao Paulo on Oct. 31, 2002.

Judge Alberto Anderson Filho sentenced Suzane and Daniel to 39 years and 6 months each in prison. Cristian was sentenced to 38 years and six months because the judge considered he played a slightly smaller role in the killing, according to Chief Prosecutor Roberto Tardelli.

Brazilian lawyers were required to appeal.

Prosecutors had asked for a sentence of 50 years in prison for each suspect. A new trial would have been automatically scheduled if the sentences totaled 40 years for each.

Under Brazilian law, no one can serve more than 30 years in prison regardless of the sentencing.

The brothers have confessed they beat the couple to death, and Tardelli said Suzane was the "mastermind" of the crime, which he said was committed out of greed because they wanted the Richthofen estate.

Manfred von Richthofen, 45, was an engineer and the great nephew of the World War I German ace known as the Red Baron, and his wife was a psychologist. The couple, with assets valued at 2 million reais ($910,000; euro730,000), disapproved of their daughter's relationship with Cravinhos, who is from a lower-middle-class family.

"The three, acting in cold-blooded fashion, plotted and carried out the murder of the von Richthofen couple out of greed," Tardelli told the jury on Friday. "It was the most atrocious and cruelest crime I have ever seen in my 26 years as a prosecutor."

Tardelli said Suzane was driven by a desire to "get her hands on the money and assets her parents had worked so hard to obtain." AP

3 arrested in Bombay train bombings

BOMBAY, INDIA—INDIAN POLICE INvestigating the Bombay train bombings have made their first arrests, picking up three men who officials said were linked to terror networks across South Asia.

India, meanwhile, dismissed Pakistan's offer to help investigate the attacks, claiming it had previously failed to act on leads provided by authorities of various countries on its soil. India has suspended ongoing peace talks with its neighbor and rival, after alleging there were Pakistani links to the bombings. It remained in turn promised action if evidence was offered.

All those arrested were picked up Thursday and "we have definite evidences that these people are linked to terror activities," one of the lead investigators, ICP Raghuwanshi, told reporters Friday. "They have connections with groups in Nepal and Bangladesh, which are directly or indirectly connected to Pakistan."

Pressed for details, Raghuwanshi would only say: "We will place the evidence before the court."

But he said more arrests were expected soon, noting that the plotting for the bombing of seven trains, which killed 200 people and wounded more than 800, was "a big conspiracy."

He identified the men as Khaleel Ahmed Sheikh, Emaul Haseen Yasseri and Muzammil Ahmed Chowdhury, correcting names given to earlier police reports. The first two were arrested in the eastern state of Bihar and the third was seized in Bombay. None has yet been charged.

Wielding black hoods over their heads, the three were taken Friday to a court in Bombay. There, a judge ordered the three—all from Kerala state in the southern coastal area—held in custody for 10 days.

New reports said Saturday that police in Bihar also had detained a teacher at an Islamic seminary, Mohammad Akram, 35, was detained because his bus resembled one of the van sketches of suspects released by police earlier this week. The Indian Express newspaper said. AP

The WORLD

John Lorraine B. Sierra

Incursions, not invasion

Israel says it won't invade Lebanon for the moment

ISRAEL WILL PURSUE ITS WAR ON Hezbollah with more military incursions into south Lebanon, but will not unleash a full-scale invasion for the moment, an Israeli army spokesperson said on Tuesday.

Thousands of Lebanese civilians have fled south fearing Israel will invade and expand on 11 days old bombardment of Lebanon which has killed 345 people, mostly civilians.

Resisting international pressure for a ceasefire, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reduction Rice said before a trip to the region that the conflict's root causes...in her view Hezbollah's armed presence on Israel's border and the role of its allies, Syria and Iran—must be tackled first.

An army spokesperson said Israeli forces were making only limited thrusts a few kilometers into south Lebanon.

"It will probably widen, but we are still looking at limited operations," he said. "We're not talking about massive forces going inside at this point." Israel has been building up its forces at the border and has called up 3,000 reserves. Defense Minister Amir Peretz has talked of a possible land offensive to halt rocket attacks that have killed 13 Israeli civilians in the past 11 days.

But Israel is wary of recreating another invasion, only six years after it ended a costly 22-year occupation of the south.

It has already lost 19 soldiers dead in the latest conflict.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said an Israeli ground invasion would mark a "very serious escalation" of the conflict.

"If they were and moved to establish what they have called, in the past, a security zone . . . it will be a security zone for them, but for the others will be occupation and that will inevitably the resistance," Annan told CNN.

A DOG, his arms rabbit in one of Beirut's bombed suburbs, a stronghold of the militant group Hezbollah, July 21. AFP

The army said it attacked more than 130 targets in the last 24 hours, hitting Hezbollah guerrilla positions, communications sites and 15 roads linking Lebanon with Syria.

Meanwhile, Israeli warplanes also bombed one of their heaviest raids yet on the town of al-Hiane, just south of the border, and destroyed five trucks in convoy in eastern Lebanon.

The war started when Hezbollah captured two soldiers and killed eight in a July 12 cold raid across Israel, which had already launched an offensive in the Gaza Strip to try to recover another soldier seized by Palestinian militants on June 25.

Calling Hezbollah's action an "outrageous provocation," Rice said on Friday she would visit the Middle East early next week in search of a durable peace deal.

"What I want to do is . . . try to get a ceasefire that I know isn't going to last," she said.

Washington-supported proposals for an expanded international force on the Israel-Lebanon border has already been not fixed, a senior US official told Reuters on condition of anonymity. A 2,000-strong UN force monitors the border at present.

Israel's military chief, Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz, said nearly 100 Hezbollah fighters had been killed in the offensive, far more than the half dozen deaths announced by the group.

The United States is rushing precision-guided bombs to Israel, which requested the expedited shipment last week after its air campaign in Lebanon began, The New York Times reported.

Lebanese families packed into cars and pickup trucks and clogged roads to the north after Israeli planes dropped leaflets on Friday warning residents of south Lebanon to flee for safety beyond the Litani river, about 20 kilometers from the border.

Amid growing concern about the plight of civilians in Lebanon, Israel said it would ease humanitarian access.

UN relief agencies have called for safe passage to take food and medical supplies to areas of civilians who have fled Shiite Muslim Lebanese government and UN estimates put the number of displaced at 500,000.

Foreigners have also flooded out of the country. Ships and aircraft worked through the night scooping more tired and scared people from Lebanon and bringing them to Cyprus and Turkey. Reuters

US speeding up precision-bombs delivery to Israel

WASHINGTON—THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION is rushing a delivery of precision-guided bombs to Israel, which requested the expedited shipment last week after beginning its air campaign against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, senior officials said Friday.

The decision to quickly ship the weapons to Israel was made with relatively little debate within the Bush administration, the officials said. Its disclosure threatens to anger Arab governments and others because of the appearance that the United States is actively aiding the Israeli bombing campaign in a way that could be compared to Iran's efforts to arm and resupply Hezbollah.

The officials said that the United States is sending to Israel as part of a multimillion-dollar arms package approved last year that Israel is able to draw on as needed, the officials said. But Israel's request for expedited delivery of the satellite and laser-guided bombs was described as unusual by senior military officers, and is an indication that Israel had a long list of targets in Lebanon still to strike.

The new American arms shipment to Israel has not been announced publicly, and the officials who described the administration's decision to rush the munitions to Israel would discuss it only after being promised anonymity. The officials included employees of two government agencies, and one described the shipment as just one example of a broad array of armaments that the United States has long provided Israel. AFP

Si Juday at si Mommy Carol, matatas. Pero sa telenovela lang. Sa totoong buhay, di sila naghiwa. Lalo na pagdating sa ubo. Nagtu-Tuseran Forte capsule sila kasapad. Dahil do ay may multi-ginhawa formula na wala sa iba. Tapos ang ubo bago pa ito mauwi sa sipon, sakit ng ulo at lagnat.

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Bulldogs compound Tams' woes

NATIONAL University's Edwin Asoro grabs a rebound off Far Eastern University's Benedict Fernandez (left) in yesterday's game.

By Jasmine W. Payo

IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A NEW WHIPPING BOY IN this year's UAAP basketball tournament.

National University took advantage of Far Eastern's collapse in the fourth period yesterday to score a 75-64 decision that put both the defending champion Tamaraws in the only winless team in the young season.

And the Bulldogs, who [illegible] in the last five seasons, pulled off the distinction even without two key players—Edwin Asoro, Jonathan Fernandez and Howard Hao—suffering from sprains.

"We were positive coming into this game," said Manny Dandan, the narrator who moved MU to its first Final Four since 1999. "But it was hard to see those three that they saw will play here. I just told them to give all that they have."

Asoro powered the Bulldogs to their first win in three games with a game-high 20 points and 14 rebounds.

Fernandez, who drained all of his 16 markers in the second half, rammed up with fewer to a 17-2 blast that stretched MU's lead to 67-52 midway in the fourth quarter.

The Tamaraws slumped to an unexpected third straight defeat.

The Bulldogs also got huge support in the final stretch from Joseph Gregorio Lingan, who finished with nine points and nine boards.

Everything looked quite good for the Tamaraws at the half until the Bulldogs rediscovered their range in the third quarter.

The Bulldogs, who last seven were FEU on Aug. 23, 1998, outscored the Tamaraws 15-9, in the third period to move within a point, 43-44, from a 28-39 deficit.

Another spurt had the Bulldogs scoring away for good, 69-58, with only three minutes remaining.

The Tamaraws' shooting percentage dipped to 37.3 percent in the fourth quarter.

Jonathan Adiuba started strong, firing nine of his 11 points from beyond the arc to lift the Bulldogs to a 12-11 lead midway in the first period.

The Bulldogs continued their impressive showing before the Tamaraws surged ahead with an 11-0 run behind Benedict Fernandez to assume the lead at 26-25. It was a [illegible] by Fernandez that gave the Tamaraws' charge an 11-point lead by an unassisted triple.

Finally, the Arwen Blue Eagles and the FEU-Diliman Tamaraws grabbed a piece of top spot after scoring their respective first victories.

Mark Lopez and Rommel Rivera combined for 42 points to lead the Baby Tamaraws to a 106-89 romp against the UST Tiger Cubs for their third straight win.

Seeking an Raymond Austria's 25-point performance, the Eagles kept their pristine slate after overwhelming the UE Red Warriors, 87-64.

The UP Junior Warriors cruised to their second win in three games with a commanding 90-79 beating of the MU Bulldogs.

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Chot's RP five to play in Qatar

By Jose Navarro

REYES

FEELING TO CREATE AN IMPACT in the Jones Cup, the PBA-backed national team will try to bounce back in a tournament featuring taller squads.

National coach Chot Reyes has confirmed the country's participation in the Qatar festivities, a four-nation tournament from Aug. 3-6 where the Philippines will be joined against the national teams of Angola, Latvia and Qatar.

"It's a completely different look from Asian basketball," said Reyes.

"In this tournament, height really matters as we're bringing in a team with a good calling."

Sure Shipped's Dorian Peña, Billy Mamaril of Coca-Cola, Red Bull's Mick Pennisi and Kelly Fuentebella and Marc Pingris of Purefoods have already agreed to form part of the Sta. Gerard's frontline.

Gary Paraiso of Red Bull, Willie Miller of Talk N' Text, Coca-Cola's Jeremy Miranda will be taking care of the backcourt together with newcomer LA Tenorio of Ateneo and Arwind Santos of PSU.

Reyes said he's trying to get the approval of the NCAA management before including Ronald Tolentino and Nino Canaleta in the lineup.

"Angola and Qatar are big teams which could test our accuracy in the disabled area while Latvia will be introduced into the European style of play against Latvia," said Reyes.

He pointed out that Qatar, which has an American coach, has built a world-caliber squad similar to the US national team. Composed of basketball refugees, the Qatar national team is powered by two seven-footers and has a height average of 6-foot-5.

"Qatar really has the size but they encounter problems with Asian teams because of speed," said Reyes. Chinese Taipei used its shooting and speed to defeat Qatar twice in the Asiad Cup.

The Philippines placed sixth in the Asiad Cup while Silkroad in Action, a team made up of U.S NCAA stalwarts who finished a series of tuneup games in the Fiesta Casino, captured the crown after beating host Taipei.

Chinese-Taipei was powered by Chris Mihm, a 6-foot-3 shooting guard who saw action in the NBA summer league for the Sacramento Kings and the American Basketball Association for the Orange County Crush squad.

"It's the experience of playing these teams that really interested," said Reyes. "Every time we play stronger teams from other countries, it teaches something about ourselves."

Sweep of Saudi pushes RP Davis Cuppers to Group II

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINES PUT itself in position to jump out of Davis Cup ignominy.

Sustaining the same deadly form they had all week, the Filipino netters drubbed Saudi Arabia yesterday, 5-0, for their fourth straight shutout victory and a slot in Group II of the Asia/Oceania region of the Manila Polo Club.

Fil-American stars Rob Time and Cecil Mamiit again led the charge by turning back their singles foes before teaming-mates Calvin P.J.Tierro and Johnny Arcilla made quick work of their doubles assignment that formally got the Philippines out of Group III as overwhelming fashion.

The Philippines, after victories over Sri Lanka, Singapore, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia, remained in club until it was today on hosting.

"It's nice playing in the country where people are rooting for you," said Mamiit, the 2005 Southeast Asian games singles champion. "All in all, the team played very well and the crowd support is constantly a big help."

Mamiit, a veteran of Grand Slam events like the US Open and Wimbledon, drowned to open client in a 6-0, 6-0 cruising of Sahib Al-Hajeh is two minutes after Time came back from a first set loss to rip Fahad Al-Farad, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3.

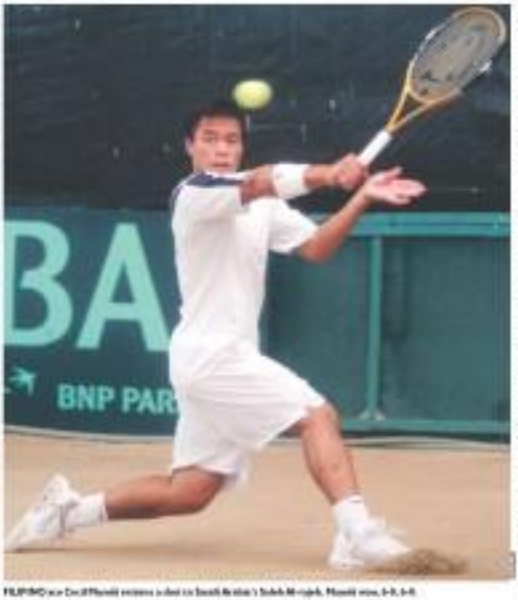
"I got off quite second playing behind, but once I gained some of things went better," said the 30-year-old Tierro, whose first set loss is bound the big weekend crowd in Chi park venue.

Tierro then bubbled down to work in the second set, breaking the Saudi for the first point and dictating dominant from the rest of the way.

An illness of Tierro then ripped the Rules of Mugali and Al-Farad tandem, 6-2, 6-2, in the doubles.

With Arcilla taking care of matters in the net and the power-hitting Time firing from the baseline, the Filipinos made it a FIVE-Day for the hosts in just 45 minutes.

"We don't belong in Group III, we just had a bad draw last year and slid here," said matinee of head coach Manuel Elizalde after the win.



FILIPINO ace Cecil Mamiit screams a shot to Saudi Arabian's Sahib Al-Hajeh. Mamiit won, 6-0, 6-0.

Sevillano cops SCCF crown in California

FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL MASTER (IM) Oliver "Jhong" Sevillano topped the 2006 SCCF (State Championships) awards after dogfight, California, Chil...

The Cebuano found Sevillano, who hails from Cebu City and is a protégé of local chess patron SM Bonifi Ang, beat Japanese-American Christian Tanaka in 26 moves of a Caro-Kann Defense in his last match to win the title in the seven-round open round robin festival.

Sevillano scored 5.5 points on account of four wins (one point from four, a draw and three draws, the same output of American IM Andranik Mouradyan. After the tie breaks was applied, Sevillano tallied 16.25 to edge Mouradyan (15.5) for the title.

Sevillano also beat Roman Dzui in round 1 after 40 moves of a Caro-Kann defense and IM Jack Peters in round 3 after 39 moves of a French Defense.

He drew with IM Cyrus Lakdawala, IM Melikset Khachiyan and Eugene Yanayt... IM Mon-Len Bercasio.

Pichay chess draws top three GMs

CRACK LOCAL PLAYERS, LURED BY THE BIG POT MONEY, have signified their intention to join the 2nd Pensamet Pichay St. Memorial Chess Tournament slated Aug. 12-14 in Camp Lim, Burgos del Sur.

Gamebusters Mary Flavigne, Jerry Antonio and Eugene Torre and circulating kibitzer-model Hamilton-Russell Building seven-peated to figure prominently in the chase for prizes totaling P500,000, marks the champion taking home P300,000.

PARACUA

The 20-year-old Filipina is coming has posted back-to-back victories in the Olympic Festival and Ukraine Open, respectively, and looms to be one of the favorites.

PICHAY

Other likely contenders are two-time National Open champ Darwin Laylo, Grandmaster Mylene Dimzon, young Filipe Eleazar Nidoy Jr. and IM Vince Abao, who ended the last two editions of the event featuring the late Judge of National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Atty. Pompeyo "Bobit" Pichay.

For a spectacular Pichay, all Pichay should is to score 9½ out of 11 points to win the P300,000 in order to attract a stronger field and enable budding Bhaktanic grandmasters to earn FIDE (International chess federation) rating points.

Representative Pichay has made arrangements with the FIDE to give every participant the corresponding file rating based on their performances.

P1M, on the other hand, will be distributed among the top 20 finishers, with the second-placer getting P60,000 and the third placer receiving P35,000.

The once-round Swiss system event is part of the festivities for the town fiesta of Catubig on Aug. 15.

According to National Master Cesar Caballa, who has been designated as tournament director, registration is P250.

For details, call organizer 0920-712-3297.

Busy year up for Tatap standouts

HALIBUDHA

TAKE THOSE AMATEURISH of the Philippines (TAtap) president Victor Velhasco wants members to present for the country's public wedding.

"Our athletes to play competitively. Practice alone will not make them better players," said Velhasco, one of the guests to Group in Banaoyan.

With that in mind, Velhasco has sought the help of businessmen-sports Cesar Montano, GTI Sports director Bobby Pangilinan and TEAM Harvard legend Edward Incon.

Caveman is sure of the regular supporters of table tennis tournaments while Pangilinan and Amon are invited event organizers.

"They can also help open doors for amateurs and more importantly their know-what it takes to compete on the tournaments for our players," said Velhasco, who is expected to reveal his guidelines as the association holds its elections on Tuesday.

The effort seems to open more windows of opportunities for the grassroots level.

Velhasco also makes it a point to oversee the development of the players in the training pool. "We're trying our best to open the players' off-time meals," said Velhasco. "So we also expect them to give their best."

B. Penalosa wants Arce after Castillo loses bout

FORMER WORLD BOXING COUNCIL champion Brian Penalosa is now looking for a new opponent following the loss of Mexican Mar'in Castillo to Japanese Yohei Matsuo in their World Boxing Association super fly-weight title fight yesterday.

Before pitching his title to Bachiao on a 10th-round technical knockout, Castillo was being provoked to fight Penalosa possibly underneath the Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales show-down on Oct. 21.

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"I want more," said Peñalosa when told yesterday that Castillo had lost. If Arce is out with Erik, the Filipino former champ said he is ready for either WBO titlist Jhonny Fernandez Hwan or the IBF champ Luis Perez.

The 33-year-old Penalosa is coming off a hard-earned unanimous decision win over Mexican Ernesto Rojas last July 2, underneath the Pacquiao-Oscar Larios III. — Nelson L. Legaspi-Inq

CEBU CARD

Suico gets OPBF title crack

FILIPINO RANDY SUBONG SUICO is set to bounce back following his disappointing loss to WBA lightweight champ Juan Diaz, as he battles his nephew Jun Diaz Orcinada and Pacific Boxing Federation (OPBF) lightweight title on Oct. 7 against Thailand's Singpatch Chaowiwatchai in a 12-round bout in Cebu.

This was announced yesterday by Suico as Japanese manager Joe Egawa, who scored Suico's physical strength and powerful power despite his loss via unanimous decision to Diaz.

Suico had held the OPBF superbantamweight title, but had to relinquish it when he decided to campaign in the bigger lightweight category.

According to Joanne Amado Abion, both Filipino and Japanese impresario Akihiko Honda were impressed by Suico's showing against Diaz, and had promised to give Suico another fight in the US. Abion also noted that after the OPBF fight, Suico might see action in the undercard of the third Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales showdown set on May 26.

The Suico-Pongpetch fight had originally been scheduled on last in Manila, but had to be scrapped in favor of the July 2 Marco-Alfonso rigid, which Suico was also pulled out when the chance to fight Diaz came about. — Nelson L. Legaspi-Inq

Lina, Alvarez joining HK awarding rites

HONG KONG—BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION of the Philippines (BAP) president Jboy Lina and PeBA (K22) president Leo Alvarez have been invited to attend the awarding ceremony of the 2006 Eastern light-Super Hong Shopping Cup international men's and women's basketball championships at the Hong Kong Coliseum today.

Lina and Alvarez will join PBA Commissioner Basketball Sidewalkers president Ted Men by Hong Hong Hong Basketball Association head Lee Kwan Shik and officials of the other participating countries during the day scheduled at 8 p.m.

The championship game is set at 3 p.m.

"It's very happy to be invited to attend the awarding ceremony of the Asia-eight-team Hong Shopping Cup basketball championship," said Lina in a message to the Hoops organizing committee and the Sun Times, headed by coaches Bobbyrad and Jolbie Tan.

Lina and Alvarez also congratulated the 18-to-21 crew which reached the semi-finals, semi-

LINA

ALVAREZ

finals in this tough, eight-nation tournament against host and defending champion Hong Kong at 8:30 p.m. Saturday.

Led by team captain Alyssa Valdez and Pha Aces Zaldy Castejon E.O. Catalan, the BAP-supported 18-to-21 team posted a 2-1 win-loss record for the tournament so far.

The Filipinos, who are also fielding supported by Asics, Federal Tires and Barangay, beat Singapore and Japan in their first two matches before losing to the host Kent Cobhouse-based Asian-American Sports Club (79-57) last Thursday night.

Against the American-trained Asics, the Filipinos played manned-led how Valez and Rosalie de Guzman, who cycled back home to Manila following the untimely death of their father early Thursday morning.

Aside from the Individual Committee, the other remaining members of the FIBA-22 team are Mark Telan, Bruce Dicta, Bernie So, Ronald Tsui, Leo Avenido, Stephen Padilla and Jeanette Ignacio.

The Filipinos' best finish to the annual tournament was in 2002, when Ramon Adduru and team with Gaudes Ino Miguel and Mary Pingris (now with Purefoods Giants) led the Barangay Gatas-supported XP team to the championship over Korea-China.

The following year, the BP-Cebuano Gandhi-at team of coach Ariel Dennis wound up runner-up to Hong Kong. BAP-Air 21 finished third twice...in 2004 and 2006.

PICTURE BOOK: Manny Pacquiao leaves over a copy of Pacific Storm authored by Japanese columnist Haruki Murakami. The latest-selling book about the Filipino boxing icon is available at all National Book Store outlets. Pacquiao-Arroyo also has also expressed interest in obtain copies.

A ring, finally, for Jun Limpot

THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS BOXing triumph Jun Limpot's mind but exhilaration is certainly not one of them.

"I don't think about it (retirement). That's the hardest thing a player would think of," said Limpot after winning his first-ever PBA championship with the Purefoods Giants on his 38th season in the league.

Right now, the most senior citizen on the Purefoods roster is just too overwhelmed with what his team had accomplished and the promise of another championship in the coming season.

"I don't want to brag but I believe I still have what it takes to compete with the younger players. We have a good team and if we stay healthy, we could probably win another championship," said the 34-year-old Limpot.

The road to a threepeat PBA crown wasn't easy for one of the most sought-after emotions in the '90s.

While new MAAP championship titles with De La Salle University, four Philippine Basketball League crowns with Magnolia and a 1991 SEA Games gold medal, Limpot was naturally looking forward to a season's ring in the professional ranks.

Drafted first overall by Ilac Lucia Dairy in 1985, Limpot were the rookie of the year award but was traded to Barangay Ginebra at the turn of the millennium with no championship under his belt.

A nephew of the late Rafajan Rey, Jose Setting, who was a former president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association, Limpot was later shipped to Purefoods in 2004.

Right after his transfer to the Giants, the Gin Kings captured two straight titles.

"There were a lot of doubts all these years but with this championship, I proved them wrong," said the 6-foot-6 Limpot after the Giants ruled the best-of-seven Game Manager Brandy PBA Philippine Cup Finals at the expense of Red Bull in six games, 4-2.

Limpot doesn't see the end of the road just yet.

"I'll just listen to my game, follow a personal goal that I want to achieve and stay away from distractions," said Limpot, whose contract with the Giants have until July 2007. *Jake Saraoza*

JUN Limpot, given coach Ryan Gregorio a victory ride.

PUREFOODS players and supporters jubilate after the Giants' title-clinching victory over the Red Bull Barakos Friday night.

Purefoods now wants All-Filipino title double

By Jane Manners

THE NEXT CHALLENGE IS TO ACCOMPLISH A feat no team has pulled off for more than two decades.

The Purefoods Giants may not be aware of it, but going for back-to-back All-Filipino crowns after capturing the Great Mandate (Brandy) PBA Philippine Cup 19 day night will earn them a renewed place in history.

Ryan Gregorio's men do, pleasing when Great Taste had done 11 years ago is not impossible.

"The team has a young core and the veterans are still in shape so I'm pretty sure that we'll be competitive next conference," said Gregorio after his Giants wrapped up the best-of-seven series against Red Bull in the fourth of the Finals.

Led by the legendary, streak-shooting Ricardo Brown, Great Taste won the all-Filipino conference twice in a row in 1985.

With the 2006-2007 PBA season kicking off with an All-Filipino conference, the Giants are expected to use their reverse conquest as inspiration in the next conference.

Rookies Mark Pingris, Kerby Raymundo and Jeffrey Cariaso (JVC) have already matured while veterans Jun Limpot, Hoy Castillo, Rey Sumgalem, Richard Del Rosario and Roger Yap are still in and healthy.

Add the lanky Jondan Salvador to the equation and the Giants are sure to be tough contenders in the coming season. Picking mainly ones all in the draft on Aug. 20, the Giants will select a big man from the pool, according to Gregorio.

Salvador's defensive was underlined by a blunt swipe during the Finals of the Fiesta Conference which the Giants lost to the Bulls. Gregorio said Salvador, a solid frontline reserved, would be ready for said conference.

"We're really motivated this conference. We have a small lineup compared to other teams and we have no legitimate center," said Gregorio, the youngest coach in the league at 34.

"But once we start thinking we're working on our strengths. I just told them that in every thing you do, you have to give your best because it could be the last," he added.

Gregorio's assistant Gregorio credits Limpot with motivating the two-time champion coach is also fortunate to have a battery of talented veteran coaches.

SEASON MVP James Yap.

Assistant coach Boy Sunal helps Gregorio on defense, despite Boston Magazine's usually tough role as the offensive play-maker coordinator while Dayong Mendoza mixes runs out of bench injuries scouting the opponents.

"What people said when Gregorio said I do it...I think they're correct because I have to send for those guys for us to succeed," said Dayong.

With a discerning coaching staff, the Giants landed on top at the end of the classification round and advanced semi-finals to the best-of-seven semifinals for the second straight conference.

In the semis, the Giants pulled off an upset only they had achieved four seasons ago over the same team. Trailing 1-2 in the series, the Giants swept the next three games and eliminated the Bulls before they up a rivalry clash with the Bulls.

Gregorio and the Giants won the 2003 Governors Cup also coming from behind after the Aces took a commanding 2-0 lead in the series.

"It's difficult to fight first Bull because of the so-called football mentality." There's always the fear of that Bull coming back in the series because of that mentality," said Gregorio.

"What we did was to counter that mentality with our attitude. If they have the first Bull mentality, we have the Giants' attitude," he added.

PUREFOODS players and supporters jubilate after the Giants' title-clinching victory over the Red Bull Barakos Friday night.

Hard-working Pingris Finals MVP

MARC JOAN PINGRIS WAS STILL REMODELing it up with the Purefoods teammates and supporters when the Finals MVP was announced.

Pingris stood surprised with his mouth agape for a few seconds before finally acknowledging the biggest individual honor given out in the series.

Nobody expected last year's third overall pick to win the Finals MVP of the PBA Philippine Cup. Even Pingris himself.

"Napaiyak ako (I was shocked)," said the 6-foot-3 Pingris, son of the Purefoods' utility man in the finished area. "I didn't know what to say except thank you," he added in Filipino.

Why not James Yap, the season MVP? How about Rudy Baylosis, who managed double-double figures throughout the series? Or Richard Del, who started for game 1 and 2.

The explanation was simple.

In the best-of-seven series won by Purefoods over Red Bull in Game 6, Yap, Baylosis and Del performed as expected.

But Pingris proved the big difference with his hard-nosed defense, tenacious rebounding and clutch shooting.

"I just played my heart out every time I'm on the court," said Pingris, also referred to by countryside fellowmen as the boyfriend of actor Vic Sotto's daughter, Dionisa, who never missed a Purefoods game in the Finals.

Pingris had decent scoring numbers, but was prolific in rebounding and shot blocks throughout the title series. Averaging 12 rebounds and 2.3 blocks a game, the son of a former PBAer from Pampanga had become Red Bull's biggest stumbling block for their defensive end.

With his high-leaping ability Silliman's, Arby Sidemeath and the high-leaping Gerry Seguio had to alter their shots whenever Pingris goes athletic.

Drafted by the Andy Express in 2005, Pingris was shipped to the Giants before the season began along with playmaker Egay Billones.

It turned out to be a blessing in disguise as Pingris, getting more playing time under coach Ryan Gregorio, became one of the most fearsome rebounders and shot blockers in the league. *Jane Saraoza*

MARC Pingris Proyot of thanks

Coach E produces top cagers

MANY MODERN PLAYERS HAVE BENEFITED from the Coach E Basketball School's personalized and scientific approach, enabling them to make it in the country's leading varsity teams.

International Basketball Association (IBA) president Ricky Palanca said the school founded in 2004 by Philippine Basketball Association champion coach Eric Altamirano always scout first on its mission to produce fundamentally sound basketball players.

"There are many basketball players in the country and the interest in the game has risen even more," said Palanca. "We'd like to think that we are giving students a deeper understanding of the game that would help them in advancing to their careers."

The school pursues this objective anew as this term it will officially start with the Ben Mahiang classes opening July 26. There will also be complete 16-sessions at the Jose M. Hidalgo Gymnasium in Libis (July 26) and Xavier School (July 31).

Call 635-1395 (Melissa), from 9 a.m. 5 p.m. Inquiries are welcome at ibsa_phil@yahoo.com and www.coache.com.

Coach E products include La Salle cagers Joshua Santos, Sachi Kinosaurus, Jon Dolor, Michael Concepcion and Jimmy Yap, along with Ateneo players Marc Cuadiao, Rabi Ibrahim, Miguel Luistro and Heather Ramirez.

They also had Ian Bodo's Lt. Bevilla and Tommy Tubalinal and Xavier's Jasper Pen in the list of products of the school backed by Si-ra Mineral Water, Gatorade, Burlington, Activated Sunshine Burger.

Current Saturday classes are on every Tuesday (1:30-7:30 p.m.) and Saturday (10 a.m.-noon) while regular classes at Gilmore (by July 28 are every Friday (5-7 p.m.) and Saturday (10 a.m. to noon).

STI dribblers stun UM

By Mars Anthony Reyes

JOSEPH PERLE BIT A LOOP AT THE buzzer to lift STI to a 63-58 upset of five-time defending champion University of Manila yesterday at the start of the National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities 82nd Cocoa Arrebolera.

The 5-foot-9 guard's game-clinching shot came after the Stanley Del Santiago hit a three-pointer to tie the game at 56 with just 18 seconds remaining.

The Hawks established a dynasty five years ago and collected their second basketball title in the Cocoa Arrebolera.

Perle supported with 15 points while Jon Mendoza added 11 for STI, which finished second to the Hawks last year.

Viloria in top shape against Mexican Romero

By Hermie Rivera

COMMENTARY

Inter-cities chess meet Sept. 13-17

A CASH POT TOTALING P200,000 IS UP FOR grabs in the 2006 National Inter-Cities and Municipalities Chess Team Championships on Sept. 13 to 17 at the Atrium of Gaisano Mall in Iloilo City.

This was announced yesterday by National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) region XI coordinator James Infiesto, who said that he expects a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 70 teams to sign up.

The champion crown will get the lion's share of P100,000 plus trophy and individual gold medals for its six members with the runners-up to receive P60,000, a trophy and individual silver medals. Third place will be awarded P40,000, a trophy and individual bronze medals.

The fourth and fifth players will win P20,000 and P15,000 and trophies, respectively, with the sixth to 10th players receiving P10,000, P8,000, P7,000, P6,000 and P5,000 and trophies, in that order.

Individual winners from board 1-10 will also receive cash prizes worth P3,000 and gold medals in that event also supported by the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), City Tourism Office, SM Public Affairs Iloilo City, PBCom Bank, Bacolod Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

Meanwhile, former Philippine Junior champion Rimmel Mariano Jonathan Tan beat Homero Montes in the fifth and final round to rule the Blitz chess event over the weekend at the Ayala Mall there, officials of Ormoc said.

Tan went on to score a perfect 5.0 points in the P10,000 championship conducted by Ormoc Mayor Eufrocino Codilla Jr. in connection with the Ormoc Inter-Cities and Municipalities tournament.

For inquiries, call or text (0920) 9348207.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Race 1—(2x5)5x—
Rosario Island (5),
Jumpin (4), Irish
Cream (3), Dan Dan (8)
Race 2—(2x7)5x—Orbit (5), Get Outa Sis (8),
Hot Prize (3), Kenzo (2)
Race 3—(2x8)5x—Jenny Thumbs Tony Road (5),
Pind Darlaque (4), Richie Rich (3), Shanil (7)
Race 4—(2x9)5x—Jeremiah (1)
Race 5—(2x10)5x—Sizzling Aces (6),
Rabbit's Heir (7), Game In Progress (1), Sweet
Promise (3), Holy Smoke (4), Queen Of Be Bop
(2)
Race 6—(2x11)5x—Adrenaline (4), Miss
Modesty (3), Lucky Friend (6), Perfect Mega
Operations (1), Paul Bunyan (2)
Race 7—(2x12)5x—California Lady (3), Dallas (8),
La Tarraja (4), Beyond Control (6), Lady
Race 8—(2x13)5x—Rose Of Sharon (3), Ms
Harlow (5), Lucky Star (4)
Race 9—Pinto Grande—Front Silver Lash Panther
(7), La Pirouette (8), Red Rider Thistle (2), Ascot
Ruler (4), Sandy Bay (1)
Race 10—(2x15)5x—Super Mike Bear (5), Supa
Diamond (4), Sweetest Moment Ally (1), Windy
Magic (2)
Race 11—(2x16)5x—Fate Of Fire (3), Yankee Clipper (2), Invisible Smile (6), Marketgrowth (1)
Race 12—Jockey Score—Jockey: Manuel Sipeda, Dandoy, Jumpers, Jonathan Ramos, Jeffrey Magat (8), Noel Pineda (4), Phelan Ellsmore (6), Pierre d'Or Blue (1)

LETRAN'S Aaron Aban tries to break the defense of Perpetual Help's Mashkir Jaw during an NCAA game

Aban, Bautista heart and soul of the Knights

THE LOW GRADE DEFENDING champion Lyceur got from preseason students rising from the last than six players from the school's 2005 and 2006 championship teams have replaced the Knights.

Those analysts seemed to have forgotten the two who are still there.

Dubbed as the "heart and soul" of the Knights, Aaron Aban and Bryce Bautista have picked up the pieces left by Jason and Jonathan Revilla to soon post up wins in so many outings in the Rizal MDAA men's basketball tours.

"They simply refused to give up every game," said Letran mentor Louie Alas. "So long as Bryce and Aaron are around, I know we have a good chance of winning the title again. They are hard working players, and they inspire their teammates."

Aban and Bautista are in the helm of a team that has been stripped of its core and reduced to a patchwork of former reserves, second stringers and lowpot newcomers.

Fittingly, they shared Player of the Week honors yesterday.

Aban and Bautista combined for 29 points and 19 rebounds as Letran clipped at the edge of an upset Lyceum 66-64 in the Knights' opener down against Mapua, where the Knights watch the Cardinals chew off their 13-point audience, the veteran duo squeezed every ounce of championship experience in their body to help their wards forge a 79-71 victory. That loss, they vindicated for 15 points.

"That game did not only test our skills but also our mental character," Alas said. "It prepared us for our next opponent's next week against a very strong team—San Beda."

But the Knights face the Lions without Aban. Especially with Aban and Bautista in mind.

"There are no leaders. We won't get this far without them," said Alas.

Bata, Django, 11 other RP cue masters open IPT bids

LEROY "SMOG" REYES AND FRANCISco "Django" Bustamante Sunday a crack Philippine delegation scoring action to the season's 6th International Pool Tour 2006 South American 6-Ball Championships starting today at the Sepulveda Pool in Los Angeles.

Reyes, the 2006 Iran Miguel Ashie 9-ball tour Vietnam leg winner, is seeking to become the first player to reach the finals of the $2 million (around P110 million) event for the second straight year.

"Please pray for us," said Reyes in SLspeak.

Reyes, who won the World Pool championship in Cardiff, Wales, in 1999, was knocked in Group 9 along with 2004 US Open champion Gabe Owen of the United States, Francisco Bustamante, Marlon Manalo and Jose "Boboy" Parico Jr. also in Groups 10, 12 and 20, respectively.

The best on the only diploma seeded into the main draw, the cue ace after cruising from the Philippines, including former world champ Alex Pagulayan and Dennis Orcollo were through different qualifying stages to get to the tournament proper.

DJANGO BUSTAMANTE

BATA REYES

The other Filipino qualifiers are former AZ Billiards Rookie of the Five Ronnie Alcano, Warren Kiamco, Rodolfo Luat, Gandy Valle, Antonio Lining, Edwin Mordeno and Gener Sumilang.

A whopping $150,000 (around P825 million) awaits the winner, the biggest cash money's in Dipcapel tournament.

Tournament format calls for the 200 players to be divided into 40 groups of five players each with the top three from each group advancing after a round robin elimination. The 81 players who fail to advance will earn $2,000 each.

"We have a very strong chance to win the title, since the 11 Filipinos are scattered in different groups," said billiards patron Ariston "Butch" Payot.

As for Valle drew the toughest bracket, falling in Group 26 together with former world champions Mike "Iceman" Immonen of Finland and Oliver "The Machine" Ortmann of Germany, plus talented long-time Chinese "The Billy" Bojorel. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor/Reporter*

SPORTSWATCH

Olivarez Cup registration opens

REGISTRATION IS NOW ONGOING FOR THE SLAMFEST OPAGE GROUP TOWN Olivarez Cup to be held on Aug. 5-6 and 12-13 at the Olivarez Sports Center in Parañaque. Events on the open boys and girls' 10-under, 12-under, 15-under and senior 15-under divisions. There will also be competitions for veterans in the 40-years old, 45 years old and 50 years old divisions. Entry forms are available at the tournament secretariat's office at the Olivarez Sports Center in Barangay Don Bosco in Parañaque City. Call (02) 8820-1165 or (0920) 929-2225. Deadline of entry is Aug. 5 at noon.

Fistorama features Jara vs Rodrigo

BY EMMANUEL LAUREL SALANTE JR. OF THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Bantamweight champion Rey Jara and WP No. 8 Ajay Rodrigo, Jr. are expected to headline tomorrow's Fistorama at the Pasay City Convention Center.

Jara will defend his WBO Oriental crown against Rodrigo, who is ranked No. 8 by the WBO.

The fight was originally scheduled for July 15 but was moved to tomorrow after Jara suffered a cut on his left eyebrow during a sparring session.

Jara, who is ranked No. 9 by the WBO, has a record of 23 wins, 19 by knockout, and two losses.

Rodrigo, on the other hand, has a record of 15 wins, 11 by knockout, and one loss.

Also on the undercard are Jerwin Ancajas, Rey Loreto, Rey Megrino, Jonathan Taconing, Rey Bautista, Jeffrey Mariscal, Jimrex Patalan, Arnel Tinampay, Ronnie Baldonado, Jerry Pacheco, Jerry Tomogan, Jerry Belmonte

Tour boils down to last time trial

ITALY'S Mauro Vanetti (Quick Step-Innergetic Bel) tops the 16th stage.

MACON, FRANCE—After a leisurely ride on Friday, one of the most dramatic Tour de France editions in years reaches a crucial stage on Saturday—the individual time trial.

The question on everyone's lips: Can American Floyd Landis overcome a 30-second deficit and wrest the yellow jersey away from race leader Oscar Pereiro of Spain?

The two-time Tour champ trailed the yellow jersey back and forth since last Saturday. Now, the time trial likely will determine who will wear the maillot jaune after it storms—or thunder in from.

"I feel pretty good about my chances," Landis said after Friday's penultimate stage, in which the leading contenders rode together, trying to recharge their batteries before going to the Alps. "I'm optimistic."

Saturday's race against the clock is a 57-kilometer (35.4-mile) ride that makes from Le Creusot to Montceau-les-Mines. It should reward rider riders, who will have one big test to review—color of the underpants, much more than at least to complete.

The last three riders to go will be Landis, second-placed Spaniard Carlos Sastre, who's 11 seconds back, and Pereiro.

The course is about the same length as the stage 1 TT that Landis won by more fifty Landis finished second in that stage, 1:10 faster than Sastre and 1:40 ahead of Pereiro.

But extrapolations mean little this year, when seven different riders have worn the yellow—one short of the record.

Solid superdomestic finishers are replacing Lance screaming's era of dominance.

Whereas forecasting meticulously dropped away at last climb, 30-year-old Landis has shown a flair for drama—heavily-tracking race dog, then coming back with a come-in-at-lifetime ride.

He became a fan favorite on Thursday, winning the final alpine stage in climb his 4-minute, 8-second deficit to Sastre to 38 seconds and moving him back to contention.

Making it even more incredible is that Landis is riding with an arthritic hip, an injury from a 2003 crash that he hopes to correct with surgery this season.

"The other day, when I saw Floyd struggled, I saw my in my head that I wasn't happy," said Pereiro, a former physical examiner who calls Landis a friend. "Now I am."

"But it's done that it's going to be harder for me to win the Tour," he said, acknowledging that Landis is typically stronger in time trials.

"I'm going to climb the limit."

On Friday he used the other top riders took it easy as Italy's Mauro Vanetti won the 16th stage, out-sprinting two other breakaway riders at the end of the 197-kilometer (122.4-mile) ride from Moulins to Macon.

The Quickstep rider clocked 4 hours, 16 minutes, 15 seconds. Pereiro, Landis and Sastre rounded out minutes later.

Dessim, of the like Sastre's squad, holds a thin 12-second lead over Team CSC rider and fellow Spaniard Sastre.

But the Spaniards won't own their teams' biggest cash.

Sam Bauer of Italy the Team CSC leader, was disqualified on the eve of the Tour, implicated in a Spanish doping investigation. The start of Pereiro's team, Alejandro Valverde, crashed out in Stage 7 with a broken right collarbone.

The doping probe—and the absence of now-retired Armstrong—have plagued Tour-ne with fans' attempts to figure out the favorites for the title. Going into the Alps on Tuesday, several cyclists held out hope for the yellow jersey.

Thursday's final Alpine stage functioned the Tour to Pereiro, Sastre and Landis.

Even so, 19 Medio rider Andreas Klöden of Germany, the 2004 Tour runner-up and a strong time-trial rider, has an outside shot at the title, 2:28 behind Pereiro. AP

PERIOD: Yellow jersey

LANDIS: Favorite

Rodriguez achieves milestone

TORONTO—SEIN TOSS YANKEES TURN tournament Alex Rodriguez became the youngest player to reach 450 home runs in Major League Baseball when he hit one against the Toronto Blue Jays on Friday.

The three-run homer in the third inning off AJ Burnett was also Rodriguez's 2000th hit.

Rodriguez, who turns 31 next Thursday, is the eighth player to get his 2000th hit before the 31st birthday.

The milestones come as a time when Rodriguez has struggled. He committed his team-leading 17th error in Thursday's loss to Toronto.

Kei Griffey Jr. was the previous youngest to reach 450, the day 31 years, 201 days old when he did it on August 2002. AP

Ohio tennis: Williams rips Frazier

MASON, OHIO—SERENA WILLIAMS REACHED the semifinals for the first time in more than a year, beating Amy Frazier, 6-2, 6-2, on Friday night in advance at the Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open.

Williams, a seven-time Grand Slam champion whose WTA Tour ranking fell to 140 while she took six months off with a chronic left knee injury, will meet Gisela dulko. Dulko beat Vera Zvonareva 6-4, 6-4. Williams lost your best a semifinal at Doha in March 2005. She's played only nine tournaments since then.

"It feels good," Williams said. "I've come this far, I don't want it to end now—keep going. I think I'm definitely getting better. I just need to keep playing. I need to be playing."

Zvonareva routed 10th-seeded Jelena Jankovic, 6-1, 6-1, in 61 minutes to book her semifinals spot. AP

It's still USA, but where has all the swagger gone?

DENVER—THE LETTERS U. S. AND A still are on their jerseys and NBA players still are wearing them. But the strongest claim to "Team" is gone.

After years of dominance, USA Basketball is no longer the biggest bully in a global game, something Team USA looks in the. Training camp in Las Vegas started in preparation for the world championships in Japan next month. It's the first time USA Basketball has had an all-out training camp and competition among its best players to assemble a team.

While USA Basketball is confident it will return to its glory days with a better approach to team building, not everyone is convinced.

"They are very hard to predict," Spain's Pau Gasol, who plays in the NBA for the Memphis Grizzlies, said of the Americans. "I don't know what to expect. Any other time I would've been given them a favorite spot to fight for the gold medal.

"[But] training camp in Las Vegas? I don't know about that."

From 1992-2004, USA Basketball never lost in international games with NBA players. Starting with the original Dream Team at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics which included Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, the US was so dominant that many opponents often asked for autographs. But all that changed at the 2002 world championships in Indianapolis.

After winning their first five games easily the US lost, 87-80, to Argentina, ending USA Basketball's 58-game winning streak with NBA players. The US finished sixth.

A subsequent bronze medal at the 2004 Athens Games numbered USA Basketball officials changes were needed. That team included the likes of the Detroit Pistons' Carmelo Anthony, who played Tulsa, LeBron James, Allen Iverson and Dwyane Wade.

The most stunning USA loss in Athens was 92-73 to Puerto Rico.

"It's so re-lit-e-rated now that other teams see do it, "Puerto Rico's Carlos Arroyo said of the Olympic run of the US. "It got our confidence high. Our country is playing the game of basketball a lot more than they used to since the Olympics."

Said the Los Angeles Lakers' Lamar Odom, a member of that US team: "Everyone that was on that team probably summed a little bit from value our name through over there."

USA Basketball responded in the post-thrashing by hiring Phoenix Suns chairman and CEO Jerry Colangelo as its managing director last year. Part of Colangelo's charge was to restore the pride associated with representing the US and committed to the team through the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Instead of having a predetermined group of 12 players, the US now has 24 national team members who are vying for 12 roster spots—a move that will play to the world champ rankings, which start Aug. 13 and conclude Sept. 3.

Members of the US coaching staff led by Duke's Mike Krzyzewski, have made the same observation.

"What seemed to make sense was to develop a new infrastructure and development something with continuity," Colangelo said. "So for the very first time in our history, we now have a national team."

And by committing to the same nucleus and everyone has equal footing for a three-year period, which I think is an advantage that the international teams have had over us in the last decade." NY Times/News Service

TEAM USA now has just one basketball goal in mind: Restoring the dominance that once belonged to the Americans.

Young RP bets Inton, Bolinas join US archery tilt

THE PHILIPPINES' YOUNG ARCHERY sensations get their baptism of international fire when Rory ores arrives in the 32nd National Target Archery Championship from July 31 to Aug. 6 at Colorado Springs in the United States.

National junior champion Leina Bolinao and two-time gold medalist cadet archer Mariel Elarbe form clutch with Inton Inton's Drive would repeat the feat of the last of her 13 years and 47 fights.

That became unnecessary when he stopped Jiangsuard in the 11th round, an encounter that also saved some of the sting of a lopsided beating Gatti absorbed at the hands of Floyd Mayweather Jr. in the previous June.

Whenever Gatti (46-7, 33 KOs) decides to hang up the gloves—and he intimated that such fight will bring another reassurances—he will leave as one of the sport's genuine performers. That quality has endeared him to fight fans in New Jersey, who had already snapped up all 15,000 tickets in Boardwalk Hall by early in the week.

His legacy savant in Atlantic City, he seemed unconcerned about whether his achievements merit consideration for boxing's hall of fames.

"To be honest, I really don't care," Gatti said. "If would be nice if I was inducted, but if events like some writers don't think I should be, that if you ask the fans, they think I should. So I'm not going to break my head over that. I'm not down. The boxing hall of fame's for veteran fighters, and I'm not ready to retire."

In the 29-year-old Gatti's 1422 9-0, 13 KOs), Gatti will face a fighter who has been knocked down only once as a professional and who shocked Luis Andel on January to win the welterweight title as a heavy underdog. AP

ARTURO Gatti (left) and Carlos Baldomir pose during the weigh-in.

Third world title motivates nervous Gatti

HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY—SEE SPORTS D. AP
are for almost retired, Arturo Gatti said he has his desire back as he heads into Saturday's WBC welterweight title bout against reigning champ Carlos Baldomir.

"Not only alcohol, sorry nervous," Gatti said at a news conference held a short distance away from his home in Jersey City. "I haven't felt like this since I fought Kory Robinson in '93, my first title fight. I want this fight more than ever."

Boxing Promoter started Gatti the IBF junior lightweight title, his first, and then went on the WBC junior welterweight belt in 2004 against Gianluca Branco in Atlantic City. Boardwalk Hall, the same arena where he will face Baldomir.

The chance to win a belt in a third weight class a nice motivator for the 34-year-old Gatti, who admitted after beating Thomas Damgaard in January that he had decided a loss to the six-letter Drive would signal the end of the line after 13 years and 47 fights.

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Championships held at Sway Field in Hulin, Olympics.

"Selection trial experiences will surely help Sony their God-given talents and we (NAAP) are here to support them," NAAP president Leonora Jimenez said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2006
E-mail sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Teddyboy S. Melendrez

Els keeps Tiger in sight

HE'S WITHIN reach of two quality rivals and will observers believe it's time to call the British Open a day. The Claret jug belongs to Tiger Woods. AP

Faldo: Woods makes the chase tough

HOYLAKE, ENGLAND—NICK FALDO EXECUTES golf so well he won a couple of British Opens, broke Greg Norman's heart in the Masters, and destroyed the hopes of the Americans in more than one Ryder Cup.

Not exactly the kind of guy you would expect to see acting like a Tiger Woods groupie.

But there Faldo was on Friday asking Woods for reassurance and nodding sure he didn't step in his line or answer in his backswing as Woods related a round of the British Open.

"The sun has got a heart and brains that are better than anyone else's," Faldo gushed.

Faldo wasn't the only one to notice that an unnerving pursuit in afternoon and everyone turned to see just how low Woods would go.

Heavy low, as it turned out. A 4-iron into the cup on the 14th hole will be the shot replayed over and over again, but the methodical way Woods went about his business to the end resonates why he will be holding the claret cup aloft for a second straight time tomorrow Sunday.

Oh, there's a little business left over the weekend, and the names of Ernie Els and Thai pesky Chris DiMarco to take care of.

But, leaving an unexpected backseat—off the fifth tee, there are no surprises in this Open for Woods. The swing coach offers no penalty, he can see off with a 2-iron when others are hitting driver, and the par-5s might as well be par-4s.

There is no close as a back nine goes. Woods could play Faldo his driver and still solve it.

Actually, he just might. Faldo asked him for it for his son, and since Woods has hit it only once all week he really doesn't have any use for it anyway.

"If the weather stays decent, he will get to 20-under and good luck," Faldo said. "I love are they going to beat him with that score?" AP

HOYLAKE, ENGLAND—TIGER WOODS COULD not even see the flag, but he knew his 4-iron was close to perfect. Thousands of fans who were crammed elbow-to-elbow on a grassy hillock above the 14th green saw the ball bang into the cup, but they had no idea who hit it.

Seconds later, when Woods emerged from behind a row of bankers and high-level his caddie, the mystery was over.

The question Friday was whether the British Open was over, too.

Woods put on a clinic with his long irons, none more spectacular than his eagle from 209 yards on one of the toughest holes at Royal Liverpool. It curled him to a 7-under-66, matching his best score ever in a major, and gave Tiger a two-shot lead over Ernie Els.

"I was just trying to land the ball on the front edge and let it chase on there and get my 4 and go on," Woods said. "It happened to go in."

But when asked whether the tournament was over, Woods capped the table.

"I'm not here with the claret jug," he said. "We've got a long way to go, man."

Even so, his name atop the leaderboard is a daunting sight at Grand Slam events. This is the 10th time with three Woods has had the 36-hole lead in a major, and he has never lost from out front.

That didn't seem to bother Els. When the big fans headed to the first tee, the scoreboard already showed Woods at 11-under par.

Instead of getting spooked, Els was inspired.

"I left 12 under, there's some birdies to be made out there," Els said. "I had to get my share of them."

Els made birdie on all the par 5s, and picked up two more strokes with shots that were every bit as good as Woods', though not quite as dramatic. One was a bump-and-run 7-iron that stopped rolling 2 feet from the cup on No. 3, the other a 4-iron from 23 feet left of the flag on the 14th. He made birdie from less than 4 feet for his 65.

All along, his target was Woods and that posted score of 12-under 132.

"I didn't want to finish down," Els said. "I really was trying to get into the final group. I haven't been in this position for a while. It's fun to play as well as even before on the weekend. Maybe I'll have to."

It will be the first time Woods and Els have played in the final group in a major since the last round of the 2000 US Open, although that was hardly a fair fight. Woods had a 10-shot lead, and wound up winning by 15.

But with two days remaining, the British Open was hardly a two-man race.

Chris DiMarco, whose mother died of a heart attack July 4, emerged from his slump with a 65 and was three shots behind at 9-under 135. Another shot back was two-time US Open champion Retief Goosen, who had a 66.

Still, it all starts with Woods, who is trying to become the first back-to-back British Open champion since Tom Watson in 1982-83.

"Tiger is the best is hard to beat," said DiMarco, who lost a playoff to Woods in the Masters last year. AP

ONCE again, Ernie Els faces a familiar obstacle.

With knee-ache gone, it's time to deal with that pain in the neck

HOYLAKE, ENGLAND—THE PAIN in his knee is gone, but it's that lingering pain in the neck named Tiger Woods who is still there to bother Ernie Els. This is a psychological hurt, one that is not easily obtained. But for anyone.

Especially not for Els.

Woods has taken a spot in many a golfers' head, but none quite so passionately as Els, the big, fun, who has had a tough time living and competing in the midst of the game's No. 1 player.

Nobody in golf has finished runner-up to Woods as often as Els, which is nothing to be embarrassed of unless you have done the equivalent, similar designs on greatness.

That is why Els' 7-under-par 65 on Friday at Royal Liverpool was so huge.

When just about everyone was ready to describe a familiar tattoo on the Claret Jug and talk about Woods' 11th major title, Els put together his own 65 to set up an interesting final 36 holes at the 135th Open Championship.

Exactly, that's what I was thinking exactly on the back nine," said Els, 36, after closing the gap to a single stroke heading into today's third round. "I didn't want to get in any aggression, but I needed to keep the foot on the pedal. I needed to try and get close to him.

"As you and I know, he's quite a good finisher anyway, so you need to kind of reach out and try and hold him back.

Benign conditions continued to favor the field at Royal Liverpool, and Woods, 30, took advantage, making an eagle 2 at the par-4 14th to propel him to a familiar place, atop a major championship leaderboard.

His 65 put him at 132, 12 under par, tying the Open Championship record for 36 holes in relation to par.

Defending champion Phil Mickelson shot 71 to fall eight behind.

"I'm not here with the Jug," Woods said of the talk that the tournament was over, just as Els was beginning his round, trailing by eight strokes.

Oblivious to one who has made up ground on Woods in a major, He did it at the 2001 Masters, where Woods led by three but bogeyed the final two holes to fall into a playoff. Woods won on the first extra hole.

"Tiger at his best is hard to beat," DiMarco said. "Tiger at a course he likes at his best is really hard to beat." NYTimes News Service

ENTERTAINMENT

Lito Erwin G. Velorio

No coming-out party for Sarah?

She'd rather have a big family outing, says the hard-working singer

By Marinel R. Cruz

THERE WILL BE NO coming-out party for hard-working singing superstar Sarah Geronimo.

Viva top honcho Vic del Rosario told Inquirer Entertainment that Sarah's parents had turned down offers from Viva Entertainment and ABS-CBN to shoulder the expenses for their daughter's 18th birthday party.

Sarah is one of Viva Entertainment's top moneymakers. She also plays the lead in the prime time soap series "Mutya Walang Kupas" on ABS-CBN and is one of the network's biggest endorsers.

Now that she is turning 18 on July 25, Sarah is being compared to fellow Viva talent Isabelle Ann Go, whose big debut two years ago was highly publicized, and reviewed on the Entertainment newsreels.

A Viva insider said Isabelle's party had pushed through because her own family had shelled out money for it.

Family affair

Del Rosario on Friday denied rumors that Viva was too stingy to throw a bash for its superstar. "Sarah prefers a simple celebration with her family," he said. "(And) I don't think it's because her parents don't want to spend for it."

Sarah had said as much this at the launch of "Secondary," her latest album on Thursday night: "Gusto ko po sana family outing," she told a group of entertainment writers. "But since it's been raining, I guess we'll just stay at home. (But it that way)—stay private. I guess a debut for me would be exciting, pero nakakapagod kasi 'pag ano. I only want to be happy on my birthday."

Last week, had a celebration on the set of "Little Big Star," which she hosts. Another party is scheduled today on the noontime variety show "SNAP," according to Del Rosario said.

Three wishes

Sarah said she wished for three things this year: top of the line laptop and cell phone, and "forbidden terrier puppy for he she's got the pup, which her parents got reportedly for Christmas.

"I also want to be more successful, particularly in my singing career," the singer said. "I dream of becoming an international artist. But that's really up to God. I'd be thankful for whatever it is given me."

"Secondary," is scheduled for release in Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia, said Del Rosario. It is produced by Vin Abrenilla by Carlo Paez and Christian de Walden, who were also responsible for the European release of Rochelle Aguilar's hit song "Anak" and Rico J. Puno's "Magkaisa" in the 1970s.

Inquirer Entertainment sat down with Sarah for a while during Thursday's launch.

How was album records more mature. Is this a personal choice?

Yes. Now I'm tired the sound of my voice should match my age, and that I wouldn't keep singing kumpleanyan songs. I think he's right.

Does this also means you're ready to have a boyfriend?

Although it's already legal for me to have a boyfriend, I don't think I'm emotionally ready. It's curious about how it feels to be courted by men...inspiring signes. But I will think of myself as a child, wait po muna ang kalokohan.

Now that you're 18, do you see possible changes in your personality?

Ang bata pa rin po ako, e. I know in time, I'll be more mature. I just don't want to force it.

Tell us about the music video.

The video for my current single "Carry My Love" is directed by Jerel Bautista. I play a princess who's cursed and trapped in a castle. My prince charming...inspired in lamb...ar...rose. I have healing powers so I take care of him, but I still can't get out of the castle.

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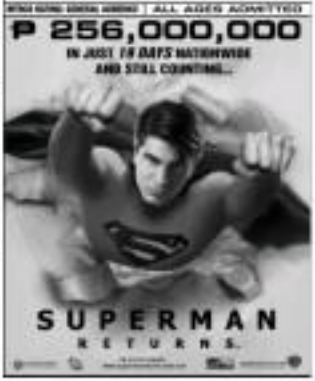

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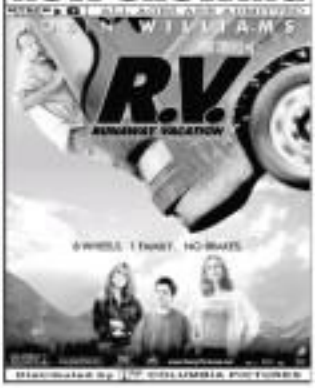

Separating the grain from the chaff in TV-Film awards

THE FILM TV AWARDS SEASON IS UPON US again, so what's new to dish? Some juvenile and fundamentalists are dubious and those agnostics are suspect as what objective weight should we place on their verdicts?

For years now, we've been unhappy with some TV-Film awards' believability. We hate it when we take some awards seriously only to learn that politics, pressure, personalities and even Infinity have figured in the decisions. And we avoid events hamming in the competence issue.

To protect ourselves and avoid being used by

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

acting groups, we've opted not to pay too much attention to awards in general.

This is the height of young shows are have been judging all sorts of competitions for a long time now. But reliability is a major factor in our book, so we've distanced ourselves from some awards that have turned out to be dubious, and now say no to many invitations to judge all sorts of events.

Is this a cop-out? Above simply avoiding being used yet again and inadvertently validating the dubious awards? Perhaps. Instead of commenting on specific awards, we'll just offer some observations and criteria we use in choosing which awards to honor and which to ignore.

First, we don't believe in awards that are dubious all around. We go by the numbers of some, like the URIs, and not flaws or withdraw our own evaluation of outstanding work.

What are other entertainment fests to do? With hindsight as guide, choose only a few awards to believe, and give the subjective, ignorant or unpalatable object the cold shoulder.

With a more judicious audience, the final expectation is that, in time, the extensively unreliable awards will die a natural death from lack of public support and approval, while the objective and competent few will hold fellow away. We can hope, can't we?

Small worries

LOSE some, win some: A couple of months ago, we complained in this space that late-evening TV newscasts were doing a disservice to viewers by being too relevant in midnight or even later, in favor of more profitable entertainment during.

Well, ABS-CBN appears to have seen this light, and has come up with a new late-evening newscast, "Bandila," that is living proof we have done 10:30 p.m.

Yet some fear that the viewing public is perceptibly grateful for ABS-CBN's decision to be of better service, and will support the new program with nightly patronage.

When will GMA-7's news news department see the light in this regard?

Another positive observation: We also recently called upon TV newscasters and field reporters who persistently and over-insistently solicit comments like "oh" and "no" in key words in their sentences, sounding like they cannot find even bookpunkers to their pulled-up shorts.

We called them "echo" newscasters, and begged them to quit sounding as "Dito" reads."

Well, we don't know if our cues are playing dumb or not, but the three TV newscasters we had in mind no longer seem to be giving the "echo" treatment, and are sounding more natural in the way they report the news.

Perhaps our fervent

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LADY IN THE WATER
WHITE LADY
LOVEWRECKED
THE HUN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
GOOEY MOVIE 4
LAKE HOUSE

CINEMA 8

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
LADY IN THE WATER
SUPERMAN RETURNS
WHITE LADY
LOVEWRECKED
THE HUN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
GOOEY MOVIE 4
LAKE HOUSE

CINEMA 9

NACHO LIBRE
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
SUPERMAN RETURNS
LADY IN THE WATER
WHITE LADY
LOVEWRECKED
THE HUN
I WANNA BE HAPPY
GOOEY MOVIE 4
LAKE HOUSE

CINEMA 10

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LADY IN THE WATER
SUPERMAN RETURNS
NACHO LIBRE
WHITE LADY

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I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE

SM City Cebu Cinema 7 | July 26 - 30, 2006

Fab Five agree on George Clooney

AFTER DISPENSING TIPS ON GROOMING, FASHION, culture, food and home during a Manila press con ference day the hosts of the Emmy award-winning "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," recently renamed "Queer Eye"—Kyan Douglas, interior designer Thom Filicia; beauty and health expert Ryan Douglas; food and wine connoisseur Ted Allen; and fashion guru Carson Kressley—named the top celebrity in their book.

"George Clooney is our staple," Kressley declared. Kressley added, "No matter where you see him—outdoing, or getting Starbucks coffee—he looks amazing." Douglas quipped, "We are actually agreeing on something here. It's a milestone."

Mind to the contrariness, the Fab Five named a few more names arrayed as metaphors a list of five.—Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, Johnny Depp, Matthew McConaughey

The "Queer Eye" FOX, Mondays, 9:30 p.m. hosts, who recently finished shooting their 100th episode, are in Manila for a three-day visit.

—Joyce C. Abrabe

ARGACCUSTOMS Bobby Nakaura and Mike Enriquez

FRANCHISE Perez

GMA 7's Cebu blowout

By Mei Velora

CEBU CITY—"I'M THINGS I DO FOR A LIVING," said Jessica Soho, GMA 7 vice president for News, after singing "Marvel Ville" before a crowd of thousands who had trooped to the Mandaue Sports Complex on July 15 to watch the network's 56th anniversary bash.

Not to be outdone, Arnold Clavio and Love Add ves joined each did a duet of "Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang?" Vanessa Enriquez serenaded the show host with "Nasaan Ka Man," with co-host Becca.

Jiggy Manicad only had to wear his heartthrob persona to win the crowd.

The news personalities, not used to being serious, admitted to being nervous performing onstage. But in true Ilonggo fashion, the "team" of GMA 7's news block entertained the Cebuanos with a lot of heart.

And those they also had to sign autographs, like the stars of the network's prime time shows—Jay-R, Bela, Khian Ramos, Patrick Garcia and Camille Prats, Jeanjean de Leon, Maureen Larrazabal and Francine Perez.

Free services were offered in various booths sponsored by eye-saving shows. Hundreds had their blood pressure taken in Chavit's "Emergency" booth, where medicines and vitamins were also distributed and emergency treatments conducted.

The booths of "Bay Isaan Teyn," "Wish ko Lang," and "Nag Pagbabago" transformed somers "climate" with new haircuts. See a few more slide to call loved ones abroad through a "Tawag Tawag" booth.

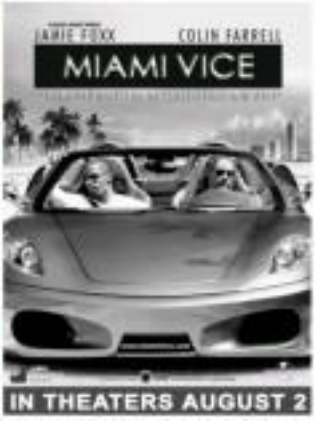
Lawyer Felipe L. Gozon, GMA 7 chair, president and chief operating officer, announced the network's expansion program in the Queen City and other key areas in the provinces.

Gozon said the network was set to spend P166 million for the upgrade of transmitters and video facilities. Plans are also afoot to develop more local shows in the city, he said.

Cebu socialite Loren Quisumbing said she had never seen anything like this in the city. "I'm amazed at the turnout," she said.

gmA signs autographs.

FANS rush to meet Jessica Soho.



ENTERTAINMENT

THE SURVIVORS and their saviour after ages (from left): Michael Peña plays Will Jimeno; Nicolas Cage plays John McLoughlin. The two policemen were buried in tons of debris when the World Trade Center's Twin Towers collapsed.

'I actually saw Jesus coming toward me'—9/11 survivor

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD
Rebecca U. Nepomuceno

LOS ANGELES—"I ACTUALLY SAW Jesus coming toward me," revealed Will Jimeno—one of a few 9/11 World Trade Center survivors—in a recent press con that left jaded reporters in silence.

The extraordinary, moving story of Will and his fellow survivor, John McLoughlin, is told by Oliver Stone in the film "World Trade Center." Will and John, then ineffectively policemen who had gone to rescue people trapped at the World Trade Center, were themselves trapped when the towers collapsed. They miraculously survived despite being buried in tons of debris.

The two men were among the last to be rescued. They aged 33 and 38, respectively. Will and John were found 20 feet below the rubble field of concrete slabs and twisted metal. A determined former marine, Dave Karnes, had a crucial role in rescuing them.

Upon watching the tragedy unfold on TV, Dave left his work as an accountant in Connecticut, went to church, wore his old Marine uniform, had a haircut and drove to Ground Zero, managing to get past the barricades. A man only known to Sgt. Thomas, who has not been heard from since, accompanied Dave to the search for survivors, even as rescuers were told to leave the site because it was unsafe.

Only 10 people survived out of more than 2,000 who were trapped when the Twin Towers collapsed. Will was buried for 13 hours while John was trapped much longer—for 22 hours. This dramatic real-life story is the core of Oliver's film.

Interviewed via satellite in New York, Will and John appeared before reporters on a monitor assembled at a hotel in LA. The two guys are from different backgrounds and have contrasting personalities. Will, who was born in Colombia, appeared outgoing and expressive. John, nicknamed "Irish Eyes," seemed serious, taciturn, and had his eyes downcast most of the time.

But it was John who was overcome with emotion several times during the press con, especially when he narrated how he tried to send on the radio what he thought would be their final messages to their families.

(AFP/MARIVIC A.) »

OPENS JULY 26
EXCLUSIVELY AT
GLORIETTA 4 &
GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

NATHAN LANE · MATTHEW BRODERICK · UMA THURMAN · WILL FERRELL

THE PRODUCERS

The movie classic that became a Broadway sensation now becomes a movie musical event!

GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS:
Best Picture Musical / Comedy
Best Actor Musical / Comedy (Nathan Lane)
Best Supporting Actor (Will Ferrell)
Best Song (There's Nothing Like A Show On Broadway)

MTRCB Rating: PG-13

'Some viewers may find parts of the film corny,

From page A2-1

Below are excerpts of our interview:

Did you feel the need for your experience to be told when you were first approached about this movie?

John: It wasn't so much our experience. We felt that we needed to tell the story of the men we lost this day the story of the rescue workers and their courage and bravery to get us out. We want the last men to see some people alive so we were able to tell the stories of those who didn't make it out.

What were the funniest and highest points what you were demonstrating?

John: I went to my parents' house where Bill asked me to just say hello that he wanted his another daughter to be named Olivia. But while Nicole was pregnant, I felt the reason he was asking me to do that was that he was worrying on the fact that we weren't going to make it out of Ulam. I also sent the message out that I loved my wife Oyanai and kids. It felt like those were our last messages.

My highest point, ideally, was when I heard the rescue workers cheering on top and Paddy McGee (NYPD officer) rolled down to me and said, "Boy, kids. Boy, how are you doing down there? We're going to get you guys out."

Bill: The lowest point was when John said, "I have made my peace with God" and I asked him to tell to me that I would like my unborn daughter to be named Olivia. I was making my peace with God and that's when I actually started to try to go to sleep. The highest was when they pulled me out of the hole.

Did you experience life-saving visions, as portrayed in the film?

Bill: Some people who have seen the film told me, "That Jesus part is a little corny." But that actually happened. I was brought up as a Catholic. I am not overly religious but I had lost the will to live at that point when I made my peace with God.

NOW SHOWING

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LADY IN THE WATER

AT THE CINEMAS

G1	WHITE LADY	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	LADY IN THE WATER	SUPERMAN RETURNS
G4	LADY IN THE WATER	NACHO LIBRE	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	
	LOVEWRECKED	RV: RUNAWAY VACATION	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	SUPERMAN RETURNS
GB1	LADY IN THE WATER	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST		
GB3	LADY IN THE WATER	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST		
	RV: RUNAWAY VACATION	SUPERMAN RETURNS		
ATC	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	RV: RUNAWAY VACATION		
	LADY IN THE WATER	SUPERMAN RETURNS	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	
ACC	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	LADY IN THE WATER	RV: RUNAWAY VACATION	NACHO LIBRE
M2	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	WHITE LADY		
	RV: RUNAWAY VACATION	LADY IN THE WATER	SUPERMAN RETURNS	

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AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Miss Celebrity Star Event July 31, 2006	Almond Badminton July 22 to 23, 2006

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Ayala Museum — Ode To The Penny Show, June 27 to August 27, 2006. For inquiries, please call 757-2141 to 51 loc. 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

OPENS JULY 26 EXCLUSIVELY AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

LANE · BRODERICK · THURMAN · FERRELL

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Best Song (There's Nothing Like A Show On Broadway)

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

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Greenbelt

...RINMENT

...but that's what happened'

When I closed my eyes...I don't know if I passed out — I must've passed out. I was really, [illegible] When I saw Jones, I knew. I didn't see the face [illegible] but he had a bottle of water in his hand.

I wrapped mine of it and that's when I pulled on John, "We're going to make it out." I can't explain to anybody how horrific it was down there. I will people if there are things in the film that wouldn't carry ... I mean, it was what happened.

Did you actually pray (the Lord's Prayer during your ordeal?

John: When you're drowned in water [in the film] but in reality I said the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary over and over until the rescue workers got down.

Will: We prayed together at times.

...o the film, you asked, a question to cut your leg off so you can be freed from a concrete slab and the electricity can get to John, who was buried deeper. Are you still in contact with that rescuer?

Will: Scott Stouse was the one who said he wouldn't cut my leg off. He was an emergency service unit cop. I'm very close to him.

How much do you know about Dave Karnes, a former Miss Universe, who drowned in [illegible] and left behind a son?

John: He's real. He did finish [illegible] and he did find out. So we're glad he did what he did, took that chance and saved his life.

How has this incident changed your life?

Will: Anybody who's gone through a tragedy and does not get affected is missing a normal appreciation of life. Today we are better persons. We appreciate the love from our friends, our families and the time to enjoy those moments in life that really are past us by so quickly. I hope that when people walk out of the theater, and go home to their loved ones, they hug them a little tighter.

John: I just want to live life to the fullest. I don't sweat things to get to the point of the drama and be with my family. That's how it has changed my life. I express myself more openly to my wife and kids now.

How did you react when you first saw the film?

Will: I was very pleased. Oliver and everybody involved got it right.

John: It was a very emotional experience. It was difficult to watch but I watched it all the way through. The film was very well done and stayed true to the story.

How are you feeling physically and mentally today? Do you have nightmares?

John: My legs don't work properly. I have nerves on my lower legs and large parts of my upper legs are calming. It's difficult to get around but I'm walking. They didn't expect me to ever walk again so I'm grateful for what I have.

Will: I'm able to do things that I thought I never again would. I also wear a brace on my left leg because ... my knee doesn't work. I don't have. I've had counseling and come to grips with the PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder]. I can't play soccer and things like that, but I still get around and I'm able to play my children.

Do you feel safe? Are you worried about the current state of the world?

John: Everybody's concerned with the state of the world today and how can you not be? There's a lot of turmoil. I feel safe and secure when I am and where we go. I can't live in fear and I don't want to.

Will: We have chosen that terrorism won't win. Look at the bombings in Spain, what happened on 9-11, in India—people pick up the pieces because we're not going to stop living. We are going to overcome these events as all our children can live in peace.

Are you angry at the people? Do you even think their online ones?

Will: I was living in Clifton, New Jersey, a heavily Arab area. I don't feel it's right to harbor hard feelings. Many Arab people have come up to me, condemning the terrorists. We need to judge people on a one-on-one basis. We have to understand that all people are not bad, that you have in every culture a group of people who are not good.

John: I don't have any hatred toward anybody. All this does is hurt you on, put you in a bad place. I try to see the love in people. There's how I've always treated people and how I will continue to treat people.

E-mail the columnists at ronquesada_1030@yahoo.com.

ANGEL LOCSIN

Why was Jaclyn red in the face?

WHY WAS JACLYN JOSE RED IN THE face when she emerged from the screening of "Ruled by Hate," a Cinemalaya entry at the CCP?

1) She had a very personal interest in the story of the band on which the movie was based.

2) The movie by Mike Sandejas is chaka-noise sexy pour-forth ripps of the band Utaot Isip guitarist and co-founder Teddy Diaz.

3) Peng Medina, who portrays Diaz, looks very eerily like the character in the movie.

4) All of the above.

COLIN HERRELL

This Angel's secret

ANGEL Locsin tells S Magazine her success formula in this month's issue. She does her best all the time. She perseveres at being patient and persistent. She prays a lot. "I wanted to be a star since I was a cute ... I'm not wanting any single opportunity," she says. "You come to love the business, aside from the fact that this is my bread and butter. I'd like to stop here acting responsible."

She suggests a straightforward, honest-to-goodness acting vehicle.

Pia's pick

In another magazine—Mayuri—this month, Pia Guanio describes her dream boyfriend: "Understanding, patient, loving, accomplished ... mature and more driven than I am."

The interview for the cover story was very likely done before the publication of a newspaper item linking her to "Eat Bulaga!" co-host Vic Sotto.

Which comes first, the romance or the mate?

MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY

McConaughey on eBay

DALLAS—Matthew McConaughey is selling a sports car on eBay to raise money for hurricane relief.

The 36-year-old actor is donating all proceeds from the sale of his 1973 Corvette fiberglass convertible to Operation Angel Network for Katrina and Rita recovery efforts. AP

PIA GUANIO

RUSHES

Rochaine Sari

NEW YORK—More than three months after her birth, Sari Cruise, daughter of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes, has yet to be seen in public.

Cruise spokesman Arnold Robinson has said Sari will make her bow when her parents are good and ready.

Meanwhile, Leah Remini, a friend of the 44-year-old actor and a fellow Scientologist, has this report: "She looks like Tom and Katie, she's just beautiful." AP

This way, ma'am

BURBANK, California—"The Tonight Show" had an unscripted moment when a woman from the audience walked up to Colin Farrell as he was talking to host Jay Leno. The 30-year-old Irish actor quickly escorted her off stage and asked for security in the incident Thursday.

"She said something to Colin Farrell that no one heard," said Molly Mahanay, 16, from St. Paul, Minnesota. AP

Look who's 18!

PASADENA, California—Actor Haley Joel Osment has turned a rib and four bra shoulders in a car crash early Thursday, his doctor said.

The 18-year-old actor was in good condition and expected to make a complete recovery, said Dr. Paul Gilbert, an orthopedic surgeon at Huntington Hospital here. AP

CAPARAS signs deal with Felipe L. Gozon, GMA 7 chair and CEO.

Where his loyalty lies

Text and photo by Nito Valera

"I KNOW MY LOYALTY WILL BE QUESTIONED for moving to GMA 7 to do 'Bahrkeng,'" said Carlo Caparas. "But next to Steven Tiller, my wife, my loyalty is to my viewers."

This was how loyalty writer and film director Carlo Caparas justified his switch from ABS-CBN, which earlier announced his classic komik novel "Pureza" for television. GMA 7 is airing "Bahrkeng," another of his masterpieces, for prime-time viewing starting in September.

Caparas told Inquirer Entertainment in an exclusive interview on Thursday that he did not bolt ABS-CBN because of "Pureza's" poor ratings. ABS-CBN, he said, had also acquired the rights to his novel, "Bahrkeng."

"The ratings might have been low," he said of "Pureza," which starred Jennifer Sanders. "But everywhere I went in the provinces, everybody talked about 'Pureza.' Children were singing its theme song."

Caparas said ABS-CBN executives had also shown interest in "Bahrkeng," but that nothing went beyond talks.

Opportunity

Instead of looking at the GMA 7 deal as an act of disloyalty, Caparas saw it as an opportunity. "It's my pleasure to work for another great network," he said, adding that his monarchy era was not exclusive to any one network.

"Even when I was still serving for the Aquinos, I never wrote exclusively for one publication," he stressed. "I wrote for all. Goes for Intrigue also up there."

Caparas described Bahrkeng as a tragic-heroic story. "His revenge against her oppressors was to have a beautiful daughter," he said.

For the creative team that would handle "Bahrkeng" for GMA 7, the challenge was how to give it a modern dimension. But it turned out to be a breeze, according to Felimon Galvante, GMA 7's senior vice president for [illegible]

She said Caparas would be involved in the development of "Bahrkeng" for TV because "no one knows the character better than he does."

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Sunday BIZ

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Tips on organizing overseas roadshows in the US /B3

■ No one is too young to go into business /B3

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

Is it just a fad?

By Clarendina Lanorte
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—THE CRAZE FOR what may currently be the world's most fashionable slippers is not going to die down yet, says Margarita Montemayor, general manager of Hialeah Marketing, who distributes the flip-flop brand Havaianas in Southern and Western Mindanao.

"In fact, these flip-flops are here to stay" says Montemayor, talking about the fashionable footwear she displays right at the lobby of Davao's hotel Villa Margarita, a family-hotel named after her.

The Brazilian brand captured the imagination of the market and revived the product into a craze.

But unlike the cute ubiquitous slipper brand Spartan, which sells as low as P50 in the market, a pair of Havaianas roughly costs as much as P633 to P1,395 a pair. Those embellished with crystals can even reach as high as P1,500 to P2,300 a pair, says Montemayor who is going to launch the Swarovski, Czech crystals and wood collections at Chimes Specialty Store here next month.

Despite the price, sales have been so brisk that sales have taken turn out of stocks, around, ing to Montemayor, who supplies nine boutiques in Davao. Industry forecasts the trend to continue worldwide in 2007, she adds.

"It's hot!" she adds.

Montemayor thinks her brand rigorously. "The thing is getting to be a 'must-buy,' a necessity."

She admits she was among those who used to think the shoe for Havaianas was just a passing fad but when she got to know the product better, she changed her mind.

"Do you think that after you've got used to the feel of Havaianas, you can still go back to wearing Spartan?" she asks. "No," she says adding that more people are seeking the brand for comfort and durability instead of

B3/B4

Flipping over flip-flops

Brazilian brand changes image of once lowly footwear

By Margie Quiroga-Espino

BRAZIL IS A DISTANT place from Manila that requires almost 24 hours of travel time.

Few Filipinos know anything about Brazil, except perhaps the Carnival—its annual street party venue where women go topless, and photos of the huge statue of the Christ the Redeemer on top of Mt. Corcovado in Rio de Janeiro.

These days, however, over 300,000 Filipinos "step into" Brazil everyday. Brazil stays with them in their homes and go with them to the malls or the beach.

They do these via the Havaianas—the popular flip-flops from Brazil that has revolutionized how Filipinos regard and how they use the once lowly slippers (now called flip-flops).

And take note at how much some Pinoys pay for a flip-flop these days...P300 to P5,000.

At current sales, economists says the past three years total over P200 million in over P900 million.

And these are just from slipper sales.

The popularity of this brand prompted local dealers to create new designs for the slippers creating a second run in the market for those who cannot afford the price tag of the Havaianas. This second line makers sell their slippers at about P50 to P150 a pair.

Quality, however, is very different.

Will the popularity of the Havaianas last?

The couple who brought the Havaianas to the Philippines are confident that slippers or flip-flops as casual, unisex-shoe-wear is here to be stepped on.

"It is a simple product that all Filipinos use in their daily lives. It's fashionable, it's comfortable, and it's practical. We have been in the market since 2000 and have changed the way people view flip-flops in the Philippines and we are just going to get better and better every year," states Alfredo R. Gonzalez, head of Savvy C.A., the firm that distributes Havaianas in the Philippines.

Freddy started the business with his wife, the former Inna Arenas.

FLIPPING B3

FREDDY and Anna Gonzalez are the young faces behind the success of the Havaianas in the country.

Havaianas' beginnings

Hasbeen married to Brazil in 1962. Anne A. Gonzalez relates that for 20 years it carried the same style—white footbeds and colored straps. One day, somebody in the beach flipped the slippers and attached the straps to the under side which was the same color as the strap creating a solid colored flip-flop. Somebody from the firm saw the innovation and adopted to—creating the first design change for the then 20-year-old firm.

Since then, Havaianas became more creative and conceived a variety of designs.

The firm has a 95-percent market share in Brazil. It remained a local product for almost 40 years until recently a few years ago that it expanded overseas.

(Continued on page B4)

Flipping over flipflops

Before they got married, the the two thought of going into business together. Both admit they had no entrepreneurial background although Freddy belongs to the Ramon family owners of ICTSI, a port operator.

They wanted to: bring a new brand of rubber to the Philippines. Anita has a sister in Hawaii who supported flip-flops—a mixture of beach habit/care.

The suggestion was strengthened when Freddy's brother, both finished his Masteral degree in Europe, brought home a magazine with an ad for Havaianas flip-flops and told the couple that the Havaianas were wearing those footwear stars in the clubs.

Anne and Freddy searched the Net for a company partner and Freddy went out before engineering interest. In early Aug the product in the Philippines.

"We did not even know if our e-mail was going sent to the right person," says Anne.

A reply came and a Brazilian Havaianas rep said he was going to visit Manila and was willing to stop by Manila to meet with Anne and Freddy.

"We took him around our malls in our car, had a simple meal in a restaurant and just basically got to know each other," relates Anne.

The Brazilian apparently liked what he saw and agreed to make the couple its distributor in the Philippines.

Anne says what was good about Havaianas is that after they met with the principals the Brazilian firm got inquiries from other Filipinos to bring in the flip-flops on the country but having already met with them the new parties were told to deal with Freddy and Anne. This despite no written contracts yet.

"Working with Havaianas set the bar for what to look for in our other ventures. Every time we look for brands we do not want to just settle for anyone," Anne relates.

The success of Havaianas surprised the couple. In the latter part of 2005, they brought in 4,000 pairs of Havaianas and distributed these only in one outlet—Rustan Alfamira in Rockwell, owned by Jon Sippers. The shop is a high-end shop for Yoga and Pilates attire that can be worn as casual gear. Price tags range between 395,000 to 95,000.

Anne's domestic gobbled up the Havaianas and in no time the first shipment ran out. Jon soon joined the two as a partner.

"The first day we brought it in, we sold out so fast we did not have enough stocks. Every time we sold our supply we would place an order. We sold a lot but did not have money" recalls Freddy.

Freddy says thats recently bought by industrialist helped them manage their cash flow and provided them with a loan to open a letter of credit and free them for daily expenses.

From 4,000 pairs, Freddy says the sales increased tremendously every year....to 10,000 in 2006; 240,000 in 2007 and this year the target is to sell 500,000 pairs of flip-flops. For the first six months, sales have reached 200,000 pairs.

Although these figures appear big, it is insignificant compared with Havaianas sales in Brazil, which has a population of 186 million as of the end of 2005.

Havaianas sells some 180 million pairs of flip-flops every year, with 30 to 35 percent sold to the international market and the rest bought up by Brazilians. Australia sells about two million pairs a year.

Anne says in Brazil "Havaianas is a democratic product....it is bought by the average person in the country's president. It is a socially acceptable footwear."

She says they were lucky to have communicated with the Brazilian firm as a time when they had just gotten a 10-distributor and were capping the international markets.

Jon Sippers adds, "since you get them so we is, they know it's a good product."

Havaianas' success has encouraged Anne and Freddy to expand their business via distributorships in the provinces.

Anne says despite their growth, they have never advertised. They add, their products via word of mouth and tapped public relations, creating events that got featured in the papers.

"When I went it, I see the product speaks for itself," says Anne.

Jon Sippers adds, "since you get them so we is, they know it's a good product."

Is it just a fad?

From page B1

just wanting to be fashionable.

"It's also for the fashionistas, of course," she smiles. "Havaianas are still the best brand of things in the market, but in Copacana de Dos, we have this fish vendor who bought a pair. She was so happy about the product that she recommended it to friends. Now, her friends are buying Havaianas. So, Havaianas is no longer just for status symbol. People are buying it because it is comfortable."

But for Gladys Lalaine Mercial, who runs the boutique "Clothes Biz" at Aztec Subdivision here, most people still buy Havaianas because of the status.

"Once you're wearing Havaianas that means, you can afford," says Mercial, who's trying to test market the US shipper brand "Crocs" in Davao.

"Even in Boracay, where you're not allowed to wear slippers, what they see that

TEST marketing crocs in Davao: Gladys Lalaine Mercial, who runs the Clothes Biz boutique at Jura Subdivision.

you're wearing Havaianas, they'll let you in," she says.

She finds it difficult to sell Crocs in the market, which she considers more durable, because people here still prefer fashionable brands.

"They have this mentality that what ever is famous, they buy," she says of the Davao market.

But fashion is basic among "Crocs" enthusiasts. The brand of slippers from Boulders, Colorado, Mercial sells at the price range of P1,200 for children's sizes and P1,400 to P1,000 for adults' sizes—it slip free, comfortable, features a lot of ventilation and is made of material which is odor free.

But people are not yet keeping it because they don't appreciate the design and they don't know anything about the brand yet, says Mercial.

"But once you get to know its anatomy, you'll be amazed," Mercial says, adding that customers who buy Crocs are only those who already know about the product. "They're interested and knowledgeable. They're looking for comfort and they're willing to pay the price."

Havaianas (the Portuguese word for Hawaiian) arrived in the Philippines in 2002, with the Manila based Serry S.A. Inc., as its exclusive distributor.

Metromayor became its authorized Davao distributor in 2005. In August 2005, when she became its Davao distributor, she got 10, 5,500 pairs and sold them in ten days.

"One of the reasons why Havaianas is such a bestseller especially in places like Davao is because you can wear it every, where," says Metromayor.

She plans to re-open her store on Jacinto this year in order to expand.

Demand is strongest during the summer months of April and May, when people go to the beaches.

Davao sells over 2,000 pairs a month, almost the same level as Cebu, Metromayor says.

A product's measure of success is imitation. Imitation Havaianas, however, are selling at P300 to 450 a pair, which costs just a little bit lower than the original pair. "The original costs P600 to P700 a pair, so when you can buy a real one at P300 more?" asks Metromayor.

"You can always tell the real one from the fakes," says Scarlet Hui, who runs the brand's outlet Glas Avenue. "The original never breaks and never fades."

HAVAIANAS ambassador Margarita Montemayor, general manager of Hamak Marketing, the sole distributor of Havaianas in Southern and Western Mindanao.

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What to consider when planning a US roadshow

By Sandra Garcia
Core Reporter

THE CURRENT REAL ESTATE boom and the surge of Filipino-American buyers have created a "confluence force" among the local property developers. Now, with the Philippine economy recovering for 20 percent of all the loans is the $5 sub is an average family income of $47,000 a year.

According to last year's sales and revenue statistics of one of the top developers, the budget buyers for the domestic sector. These have will not allow flexibility. If you are unable to foresee you your departure date, chances are

1) You will pay a penalty for changing dates or departure times.

2) If the hotels are only the way going to your destination for the the weekend.

3) When you need to adjust your tapestry arrival after you cannot reschedule your tickets—and eventually forfeit that entire leg. Refunds are out of the question.

4) The bottom line is get a good travel agent.

• When going on an extended trip make sure you have enough money on your credit card. In the US, this credit card is king.

• If you run out your credit card, you in the tourist region market and purchase a visa debit card. You will get your actual card within 10 days from date of purchase.

• Ship all your materials at least 30 days in advance otherwise courier charges will eat into your budget (you wouldn't want your self-assuming colleague from accounting to send you a nasty note) and to another. Be afraid the courier company may lying you.

• If you are to conduct a meeting campaigns or send out invitations, make sure you use the standard letter size envelopes. If your material is odd-sized, chances are the post office in some cities will charge you 15 cents more or 52 cents a piece. If you want to send of bulk postage rates, arrange your mailing list by zip codes even before you leave for your trip.

• Budget for advertising in the leading newspapers and magazines—there will be instances when you cannot enjoy space for your press releases if you do not advertise.

• Invest on good quality mailing labels—if you are compelled to purchase them here, otherwise you will spend half your time pecking them off (if you like painstaking) or time your mail to arrive at its destination.

• Be self-reliant. Even if you and your company are taxpayers, you may not always get assistance from the Philippine Consulate or tourism representatives. So rationale would be a request for a list of Filipino-American associations. Even if you tell them that you are there to support the government's overseas employment program through your deposits abroad, chances are you will be turned down. You will be told that the list is confidential. (They will mind put on this case, even if you beg and plead). But don't lose hope. A large number of associations on that "confidential list" can be found in the Internet. Log on to TheFilipino.com, where they are listed by city and/or state.)

• When you're invited out, immediately let your hosts know your preferences for food. And otherwise chances are they will take you to their favorite Filipino restaurant.

• Make sure you or your companion knows how to drive—especially in Los Angeles—otherwise getting around will be challenge.

• Be aware is a virtue. When you make a phone call, expect not to speak to a real person—99 percent of the time it will be interactive and you will never believe your phone calls in the US are answered.

Also, you will now need to pay 10 cents for a 411 call (directory information) on the public payphone and local payphones no longer accept coins.

Indeed, the credit card is king!

• • •

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No one is too young to go into business

BUILDING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL mindset in the country and starting with the youth, is the major premise of the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship (PCE), a local advocacy organization led by its founding trustee and Presidential Consultant for Entrepreneurship Jose A. Concepcion III.

Concepcion said that "PCE aims to promote entrepreneurship nationwide through its Go Negosyo campaign and this time the invitation has been for students with the Department of Education (DepEd), a Go Negosyo Open Edition, the first entrepreneurship training and conference slated on July 26-31 at the Teachers Camp, Baguio."

The conference a open to high school students from private and public schools, out-of-school youth, teachers, principals, and administrative entrepreneurs (depending on the capacity).

Also, the caravan on Go Negosyo sa Eskuwela, the partnering is set to merge education and entrepreneurship in empowering the students).

DepEd Undersecretary Fe Hidalgo said that "the program was developed under The Youth Entrepreneurship and Cooperatives in Schools (YES-CS). DepEd is official co-organizer program that ensures support, cohesion and coexistence the track education and skills training programs in the curriculum."

Dreaming big, achieving even bigger

IT IS NOT UNTRUE YOU MIGHT SOMETIMES FIND yourself above a bust for numbers. But for Mariya Montgomery, it is just for the money. From the moving her documentation with computations to talking about her work as a certified public accountant (CPA), it is apparent that, more than just a keen understanding of the numerical world, Mariya has a passion for it.

The Mindanao Occidental native's affinity to numbers must have influenced early on by her dad, Alexis Gil who worked for the municipal government. Mariya's inclination stayed upon her the discipline that comes with the practice of accounting. It also helped that Mariya was a natural at math.

"I always was around doing computations and working with numbers," says Mariya, who passed on school spelling bees to join math competitions, and why.

Not surprisingly, Mariya followed in her dad's cracks and majored in accountancy at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños (UPLB) in Iloilo. Although she hadn't considered sparring and shifting to a pro-med course, she just let course through, graduated cum laude, and bagged second accounting with roughly no hassle(s) along the way.

Being with the board exams for the 2000 national CPA exams, the same drive that fueled her many undergraduate achievements kicked in. "I thought to myself, why settle for just passing the exams? It was there that I promised myself that I would study to hard as possible to get a decent enough score to the board exams," said Mariya.

"Decent" turned out to be a huge understatement. In December 2003, she obtained the highest overall on ranging among thousands of examinees nationwide and became the first UPLB graduate to top the CPA board exams.

After followed was a whirlwind of offer from major local accounting firms, in Mariya became a top pick among the latest batch of new CPAs. "I had the opportunity to visit the different accounting firms," she recalls. "But when I visited Punongbayan & Araullo (P&A), I noticed that the environment was very welcoming. The people were very warm and I liked that."

That sealed the deal for Mariya, who was soon working with P&A to set out to justice. Because she passed the board exams in November (which to be calm before the storm), as one thing from, Mariya's introduction to her professional career was by way of her first busy season—a five-month stretch of long work hours, tight deadlines, and several clients all anxious to audit for different reasons. But Mariya wasn't fazed. "I'll be to think of myself as someone who's ready for anything and who's eager to have responsibilities heaped on."

She received her rite of passage and went on to more her own busy seasons. In 2005, when she was promoted to audit in-charge, she found herself losing heavier responsibilities: supervising fieldwork and reviewing the output of audit juniors, meeting with auditors client executives and presenting reports to audit committees.

As engagement in-charge, she was given her own team of CPAs that she had to guide and train. "I had to make sure we all met our deadlines, and I was in the frontline when dealing with demanding clients. It wasn't easy, especially during busy seasons, in 2005, when she was promoted to audit in-charge, she found herself losing heavier responsibilities: supervising fieldwork and reviewing the output of audit juniors, meeting with auditors client executives and presenting reports to audit committees.

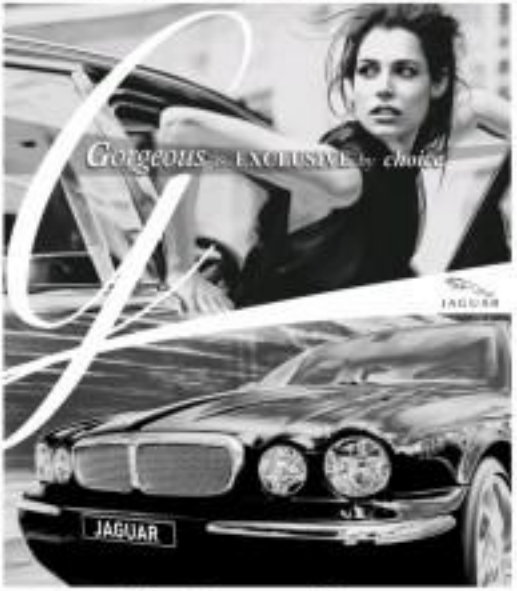
As engagement in-charge, she was given her own team of CPAs that she had to guide and train. "I had to make sure we all met our deadlines, and I was in the frontline when dealing with demanding clients. It wasn't easy, especially during busy seasons when auditors were running high hours of sleepless nights and heavy workloads," she admits.

Mariya concedes, "My role as engagement in-charge was vastly different from my previous role as audit junior, and to think this change happened in a span of only months. It confirmed what I had hoped for when I chose the field of public accounting: that graduate life (but one still happens this quickly in public accounting, especially in a young firm like P&A)."

For Mariya, what she has learned from being a first year audit in-charge has definitely been worth all the stress. Balancing technical requirements—made more difficult by newly adopted international accounting standards—and supervising people for the first time gave her invaluable experience and confidence that she said she could have gotten only from external audit work.

"In the three years I've been with P&A, I've dealt with people from all walks of life, and that has helped make me a better professional," says Mariya. In her present engagement, she also gets to "teach" junior auditors of long or two. "I emphasize to them the importance of discipline and respect and patience for the work. If you're passionate about your job, you can excel in it."

Judging by her excellent performance at P&A, she certainly seems to have a promising career ahead of her.



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MUFYA Managing Consultant with her fellow in-charges at P&A (from left): Rod Quiambao, Tess Pantoja, Donna Villanio, Lady Jade and Jobar Angeles

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Straight from the Queer Five

The success stories on the show prove that the makeover guys get the job, the look and the girl they want

I'M GOING TO NAME MY daughter Gloriessa," said Carson Kressley before the huge crowd at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati last Friday.

With the other stars of America's hit makeover reality TV show "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" who were on a hiatus after wrapping up production of their 100th episode, the wild and witty Kressley delighted throngs of fans during the three-day meet-and-greet sponsored by the Ayala Malls with Bench.

In our brief one-on-one interviews at the packed suite of the Makati Shangri-La, the Fab Five—style savant Kressley, grooming guru Kyan Douglas, design doctor Thom Filicia, culture vulture Jai Rodriguez and food and wine connoisseur Ted Allen—were as upbeat and hilarious as they are on the show. They poked fun at one another, fanged in on each other's appointed interviewers and let flow the chemistry that has fueled the show's rise to the top.

Straight from their queer little hearts, they shared on their daring histories (yes, they all dated girls) and testified their "coming out" to their families. And they all agreed the idea of doing any of the cast members was "icky."

Playful and funny as they were, they did have a serious side (well, maybe not all of them, as you can always count on the flamboyant Kressley to stick out like a sore thumb), especially when the subject of same-sex marriage was brought up.

Douglas and Filicia were second-timers in the country, having been invited by the Ayala Malls to regale mall-goers with quick makeovers in June last year. The two said they brought back in the "Queer Eye" set such good news about the Philippines that the two were persuaded to come along on this visit.

Some of the values believed here made the Filipino audience adored them until they shouted up at the Carmikaze and Glorietta malls and Ateneo Town Center, and were promptly mobbed by autograph-seeking fans—a sweet mix of those who were Pinoys and those who couldn't afford Pinoy-but-even-cable TV subscribers just the same (the show is aired exclusively on ETC at 9 p.m. every Monday).

Fifteen minutes with each one were much too short to get an up close and personal with the Fab Five as our buzzers started frightful, so you will see me in the succeeding pages. Still 100 episodes are just too darn few to make over millions of hapless, style-deficient straight guys.

But if Kressley is to be believed, the Fab Five are not saying goodbye just yet. "We have not closed up shop on ol' yer," said Kressley. "If they want more episodes, we'd be happy to give them more."

Read on and find out about the wit, warmth, mirth and style that the Fab Five brought with them to get the sun to shine in sooney Manila.

THE FAB Five, more of them needing a makeover, have hot with the Shorts in mall live audience.

PHOTOS BY RICHARD VARGAS JR.

PLAYTIME

By the Staff

Carson KRESSLEY

IS IT TRUE YOU WENT DATING THIS morning?

God, no! We flew in this morning and we got lucky because we had a tailwind or something and we didn't have to stop in Guam. We love Guam but we'd rather be here. We got to sit 4 and we got to the hotel, the Charlotte Hangar 24, which are love to death. Look at this place! I went to the gym, then I went to the pool and we wanted our pizza confirmation. So check out mine! But I'm sure I'll iron up the room and stay up all night like I usually do.

Are those any clashes of egos?

Gosh, no! Right, Michael (to Michael Hatch, the 8th Five manager)? No, if we really didn't get along, five gay men, we'd have cleared each other's eyes out, pulled each other's hair a long time ago. We all genuinely enjoy each other's company and have fun. We've been on hiatus for a couple of weeks, and going to the airport I was so excited to see everybody. It felt like one of those, like, you've been off the air for five years and you do one of those reunion episodes, and it's only been three weeks, and I was so excited to see these people.

Who would you date among the best guys?

Oh, gosh! I'll try to remember who has the biggest package. (Laughter) That's always a weird question because we've been so close for the past four years, and we've had so many unique experiences together that we really feel like family to just the thought of being romantic with any of them makes me throw up a little (rolls eyes). (It's kinda icky... if I were interested, I would be a lucky guy to be involved with any of them since each of them is special and wonderful.

Seriously?

(Emphatic) Seriously! I mean, I'm the cutest, but...

You said on "Oprah" you came out in your movie only less 'wonka buttons (the chain sliced)...

Yeah, isn't that something? You think the world've known!

Did you ever date a girl before that?

I did, but we usually went to the mall and bought shoes. (Laughter)

So how many pairs of shoes do you have?

I say hundreds, which, here in the Philippines, that's not a lot.

Are you seeing anyone special now?

No, I'm single, s.k.s. painfully alone. Do you know anybody?

Alot!

Really? Let's work on that! I'd love a guy with a huge 401(k) (Laughter)

What's your view on same-sex marriage?

I'm more concerned with same-sex divorce. (Laughter) I don't wanna get stuck with someone forever! (Laughter) I think maybe marriage is the wrong word to use. But when it all boils down, it's a human rights issue, and gay people and straight people, they should have the same rights. Whether you're gay or straight, with a physical disability, your skin's a different color, it's absurd in this age to not be aware and be concerned of the inequity in rights.

But if you ever get married, what would you wear?

Oh, Gosh! You're supposed to wear white if you're virginal, so I guess I'll wear Versace! (Laughter) Or really dark navy.

Or something like that (Carson's wearing a white print shirt)?

Yeah! This is good because it's like good and evil. You're like an angel or a devil. This a freestyle, so you know —

How do you think has the show helped in advancing the cause of the gay movement?

It's interesting because when we started doing the show, none of us really thought of it as having any sort of political agenda. And I think the real genuine boon is and the real power is that people relate to their life is that there's great power and freedom in being yourself and expressing who you are. I think the beauty of our show is that unknowingly we got to do that ourselves and express ourselves and be true to ourselves and be honest and be real. And the guys that we make over, while they go through the process of being in the show, they also show their true colors. They also get in touch with who they really are and let go of their fear and just express themselves.

Has it ever happened that you made over someone who's not really straight?

There were a few. I've wondered about but they haven't come out yet! (Laughter)

What do you think of guys who still think that fussing about their looks is a little too gay?

I think when guys are worried about caring too much about their looks, caring too much about their hair and they're afraid that they'll be perceived to be gay... Hopefully there'll be a day in our society where being perceived to be gay isn't a bad, terrible thing. The great thing about our show is that it gives permission to guys about it and it is a good thing to care about how you look and it's a good thing to feel good about how you look. The messages mixed—on our show guys that guys get the pride that they want, they get the look that they want and they get the girl. There's nothing wrong with caring about yourself.

Don't you think it also has something to do with the cult of Cindy and company? They don't want their boyfriends to look better than them.

Maybe, yeah! If your boyfriend spends more time with his hair than you do, it could be a warning sign. (Laughter)

You graduated magna cum laude and you were also a fit guy...

Yeah, I don't even know what magna cum laude means! (Laughter) It sounds kinda dirty to me! Yeah, but I was a very good student. But you know what, I've always been a little bit charming, so maybe I got better grades because I'd stay after class and say "Oh, my God! Professor, I love your shoes! Those are fantastic! How did I do in the test?"

"Laurissa." "Oh, no needs to have them that can see! How about an A-plus?" Gotcha! (Laughter)

Yes, I was in it intensely and that was cause! There were a lot of guys with their shirts off all the time...

Did they know that you were...?

Did they know? (Emphatic) Oh, no! I think they had no! It wasn't official, though.

(Whispers) Did you ever get it off with a frat guy?

Oh, my God! (Laughter) Is this for Filipino readers? (Laughter) No, I wish I had. It would've been like an adult feature. But you know, I'm not dead yet! (Laughter)

Is it harder to find a date now that you're famous?

It's not harder to find a date but I think it's like the boyfriend thing. People want a lot of people and they just wanna hang out with you, and that's wonderful because I love people. But when you're on a date, you've just finished your appetizer and he says, "My girlfriend loves your shows!" I'm about to choke on my chicken! (Laughter) Sometimes it does pose a problem, but I'm still able to be myself and it really is because people are wonderful and I love people. I'm in the people business and I love it.

Can you tell us more about your clothing line?

Well I can't really give you the particulars because the actual legal paper work is still going back and forth. But it will debut this fall with a major American retailer, probably the biggest luxe luxe retailer. It's men's and women's, about 75 percent women, 25 percent men. It has accessories, leather goods, handbags. It's a full line and it's been incredible fun to actually provide the consumer with things that people, I think, will really need and want and love and be excited about. It's been a blast.

How long has this been in the works?

Probably about a year. It takes a long time to make a shirt. What have? (Laughter)

It's called Perfect!

Yes.

Do you know how much the pieces would cost? Is it high-end?

Petitions comes in a price, you know that, so, it's definitely a moderately priced line because I'm a firm believer that looking good doesn't have to cost a lot of money. When it's quality fabric and it's a good fit, it's not about prestige, it's about looking good and feeling good. And I think this clothing line will do that and it doesn't have to be expensive. Despite come up and say "I love that top! Is that Gucci?" because it's worth $500. It's not about that. People will appreciate a good fit and how you feel about the fit is great and the fabric is beautiful and the color works. It doesn't matter what's on the label.

What do you think of the spin-offs of your show?

I think it's very flattering. I don't want to say anything bad. Imitation is a sincere form of flattery. We had a very successful franchise, and any type of successful franchise will mean a spin-off. There's Pole Jones for Ralph Lauren. Mary Jacobs works for Louis Vuitton and he also has his own line. It's a natural progression to the business.

Did you ever watch dinner shows?

Yeah, I've seen them. I think the cast was great. But I'm a firm believer that there's nothing like the original.

What would you make over among the best guys?

Hmmm... I really don't think any of them need it because we spend so much time together that we've emotionally making over each other. Like I said in the press conference earlier, Thom has helped me so much with my apartment, Ryan gives me tips on my hair and I've got them in close touch before and we've taught them... (Emphatic) You should've seen them when they first arrived! I mean... (Laughter) They all have great personal style and we just kind of influenced each other.

Who has helped you the most?

Oh, gosh, I don't know. I would probably say Thom Filicia because when he came in I needed the most help... (Jai yells "Evidence" from the other room.) No, I love you! (Laughter) I'm so ostensibly self-assured! Ironing your body is one thing but dressing your home is so much more three-dimensional and so much more personal, and I really adhere to your sound. It's really as art to be able to do that.

Is there like a smaller love among you?

(Michael) Isn't the mother hen.) Yes, just because I'm ostensibly busy. Don't you think?

Any advice to straight Filipino men?

Don't do your hair like this (shows the cover of a society magazine). (Laughter) You'll never get a woman if you do this. But these men (gets another copy of the magazine), they look good. Look at them.

But those are women!

Those are women? (Laughter) It's hard to tell anymore from this metrosexual dating trend-ell.

Thom FILICIA

WHAT'S YOUR STAND ON SAME SEX marriages?

I think there are gay families out there that would greatly benefit from the opportunities married couples enjoy. I think marriage has become a really difficult word—it has become problematic for gay families with children but I think it will happen and I hope it happens sooner than later because I think it's really important. I know there are a lot of families that would really benefit from there. It doesn't be there but it's not. But things are changing.

If you had to date someone from the 8th Five, who would it be?

Oh my goodness. Let's see... Carson I would date because he's hysterically funny. Jai because he's probably the most low-maintenance. Ryan I would date because he's probably my partner in crime. Yes I would date because he's a great cook. (Laughs)

Who would be last on your list?

Me. I would never date me. Because I would annoy myself.

What do you think of guys who still think that fussing about their looks is a little too gay?

I think when guys are worried about caring too much about their looks, caring too much about their hair and they're afraid that they'll be perceived to be gay... Hopefully there'll be a day in our society where being perceived to be gay isn't a bad, terrible thing. The great thing about our show is that it gives permission to guys about it and it is a good thing to care about how you look and it's a good thing to feel good about how you look. The messages mixed—on our show guys that guys get the pride that they want, they get the look that they want and they get the girl. There's nothing wrong with caring about yourself.

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You graduated magna cum laude and you were also a fit guy...

Yeah, I don't even know what magna cum laude means! (Laughter) It sounds kinda dirty to me! Yeah, but I was a very good student. But you know what, I've always been a little bit charming, so maybe I got better grades because I'd stay after class and say "Oh, my God! Professor, I love your shoes! Those are fantastic! How did I do in the test?"

"Laurissa." "Oh, no needs to have them that can see! How about an A-plus?" Gotcha! (Laughter)

Yes, I was in it intensely and that was cause! There were a lot of guys with their shirts off all the time...

Did they know that you were...?

Did they know? (Emphatic) Oh, no! I think they had no! It wasn't official, though.

(Whispers) Did you ever get it off with a frat guy?

Oh, my God! (Laughter) Is this for Filipino readers? (Laughter) No, I wish I had. It would've been like an adult feature. But you know, I'm not dead yet! (Laughter)

Is it harder to find a date now that you're famous?

It's not harder to find a date but I think it's like the boyfriend thing. People want a lot of people and they just wanna hang out with you, and that's wonderful because I love people. But when you're on a date, you've just finished your appetizer and he says, "My girlfriend loves your shows!" I'm about to choke on my chicken! (Laughter) Sometimes it does pose a problem, but I'm still able to be myself and it really is because people are wonderful and I love people. I'm in the people business and I love it.

Can you tell us more about your clothing line?

Well I can't really give you the particulars because the actual legal paper work is still going back and forth. But it will debut this fall with a major American retailer, probably the biggest luxe luxe retailer. It's men's and women's, about 75 percent women, 25 percent men. It has accessories, leather goods, handbags. It's a full line and it's been incredible fun to actually provide the consumer with things that people, I think, will really need and want and love and be excited about. It's been a blast.

How long has this been in the works?

Probably about a year. It takes a long time to make a shirt. What have? (Laughter)

It's called Perfect!

Yes.

Do you know how much the pieces would cost? Is it high-end?

Petitions comes in a price, you know that, so, it's definitely a moderately priced line because I'm a firm believer that looking good doesn't have to cost a lot of money. When it's quality fabric and it's a good fit, it's not about prestige, it's about looking good and feeling good. And I think this clothing line will do that and it doesn't have to be expensive. Despite come up and say "I love that top! Is that Gucci?" because it's worth $500. It's not about that. People will appreciate a good fit and how you feel about the fit is great and the fabric is beautiful and the color works. It doesn't matter what's on the label.

What do you think of the spin-offs of your show?

I think it's very flattering. I don't want to say anything bad. Imitation is a sincere form of flattery. We had a very successful franchise, and any type of successful franchise will mean a spin-off. There's Pole Jones for Ralph Lauren. Mary Jacobs works for Louis Vuitton and he also has his own line. It's a natural progression to the business.

Did you ever watch dinner shows?

Yeah, I've seen them. I think the cast was great. But I'm a firm believer that there's nothing like the original.

What would you make over among the best guys?

Hmmm... I really don't think any of them need it because we spend so much time together that we've emotionally making over each other. Like I said in the press conference earlier, Thom has helped me so much with my apartment, Ryan gives me tips on my hair and I've got them in close touch before and we've taught them... (Emphatic) You should've seen them when they first arrived! I mean... (Laughter) They all have great personal style and we just kind of influenced each other.

Who has helped you the most?

Oh, gosh, I don't know. I would probably say Thom Filicia because when he came in I needed the most help... (Jai yells "Evidence" from the other room.) No, I love you! (Laughter) I'm so ostensibly self-assured! Ironing your body is one thing but dressing your home is so much more three-dimensional and so much more personal, and I really adhere to your sound. It's really as art to be able to do that.

Is there like a smaller love among you?

(Michael) Isn't the mother hen.) Yes, just because I'm ostensibly busy. Don't you think?

Any advice to straight Filipino men?

Don't do your hair like this (shows the cover of a society magazine). (Laughter) You'll never get a woman if you do this. But these men (gets another copy of the magazine), they look good. Look at them.

But those are women!

Those are women? (Laughter) It's hard to tell anymore from this metrosexual dating trend-ell.

What's your stand on same sex marriages?

I think there are gay families out there that would greatly benefit from the opportunities married couples enjoy. I think marriage has become a really difficult word—it has become problematic for gay families with children but I think it will happen and I hope it happens sooner than later because I think it's really important. I know there are a lot of families that would really benefit from there. It doesn't be there but it's not. But things are changing.

If you had to date someone from the 8th Five, who would it be?

Oh my goodness. Let's see... Carson I would date because he's hysterically funny. Jai because he's probably the most low-maintenance. Ryan I would date because he's probably my partner in crime. Yes I would date because he's a great cook. (Laughs)

Who would be last on your list?

Me. I would never date me. Because I would annoy myself.

Who would be last on your date list? Me. I would never date me. Because I would annoy myself

Have you ever dated a girl?

I have. My girlfriend in college I dated for three years. I had an girlfriend throughout high school and college.

How did you come out?

I came out right after I graduated from college.

But when did you realize that you were gay?

I thought about it when I was in middle school. But I didn't really understand it, I didn't know what it meant. At that age and at that time, it was different. You didn't even know that that was really an option. I thought maybe everybody thought what I was thinking. When I was a little older, I realized that that was something different. I never met when I graduated from college and told my parents about it or later. But for me it was really about making a decision.

Do you find it harder to date now?

I have a boyfriend. We've been together for two-and-a-half years. His name's Greg. And I have a dog, his name's Rico. It's like...

—A family

Yeah.

Is your dog insecure about?

He's definitely insecure. He'll make mistakes from time to time except I don't think they're mistakes. I think he'll get used to me. Like right now, because I'm not with him, he's probably peeing on something in my house. But tomorrow, he'll be going in the country, he'll be at the lake.

Did you ever do a makeover on a guy who's married and not to be straight?

No. The closest I've come to that might not be true we asked them, "Are you gay or straight?" And they always say straight. So we believe them. (Rolls eyes.)

Who's the funniest among all of you?

I think we're all pretty funny. I think we're funniest when we're not trying to be funny.

Who's the most vain?

Ryan.

Who's the most jealous?

Ted.

Temperamental?

Carson.

Talkative?

Me. (Laughter)

In terms of interior design, who do you think needs the most help?

Jai.

How do you feel about "Queer Eye for the Straight Girl?"

I think it's... very different from our show (Laughter)

I agree. What was designing Jennifer Lopez' and Marc Anthony's house like?

It was really helping them create their first home as opposed to just styling their interiors. I loved it.

Who is easy to work with them?

I think celebrities in general, when you're dealing with a person who's very busy there are definitely opinions. There's really no such thing as an easy job but I think that it came out very well.

What establishments do you remember for leaving good interior design in the Philippines?

Last time I was here, we had lunch at a house—I don't know where it was—but it was really beautiful. I went to a club called Embassy and it was really beautiful. And we went to the luxurious embassy which I thought was really beautiful. And I've seen some modern ones but were being built. And I think the Shangri-La is a great hotel, especially really well. And the malls are gorgeous.

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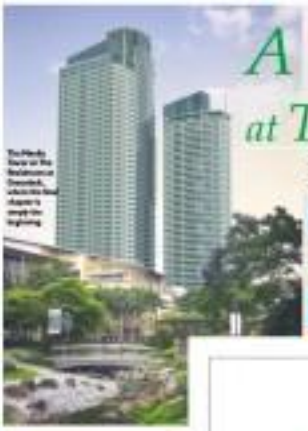

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Ted ALLEN

I BELIEVE YOU'VE BEEN IN A RELATIONSHIP for 10 years now?

Actually, 13. My manager first from our first class. In our first class was Jo. Patrick's Day 1993.

St. Patrick's Day is what?

St. Patrick's Day is a holiday celebrating Irish Americans. Irish people. It's happiness in March or April. You don't do St. Patrick's Day in the Philippines?

No, no.

OW. It's just really an excuse to drink a lot.

What's your view on same-sex marriage?

My view on same-sex marriage is that gay and lesbian relationships are exactly as meaningful and profound and valuable as straight relationships and therefore I believe that I deserve exactly the same privileges from the state and federal. And anybody in the United States law, and I'm anyone to deny me that is disgusting.

That having been said, I'm talking about the United States. It's different in every country. This has nothing to do with anybody's religion. That has to do with I live in a divorce, democratic, elected system in which... You know, I pay taxes, I deserve the same privileges. When you're married in the United States there are like 1,000 privileges that you get. Whether it's the right to inherit from your spouse when they pass away, or the right to visit your partner when he's sick in the hospital. Or if you're married and you're not married. So you can see that it makes no very sense.

The having been said, the gay marriage issue is one of the worst things to happen to gay people in the United States in a long, long time, because it happened before the midterm elections and it was used by politicians being exploited in a really disgusting way by Republican parties like the current occupiers of our White House. (Laughter)

And it played a major role in getting him elected the last time he got elected—which is the only time he was elected. (Laughter)

And it's really not that the gay issue came up when it did because it scared people, and politicians are exploiting that fear and using that to drive a wedge between people and, rather than talking about ways to make our country better and ways to make the world better, they create all this emotional divisiveness over this issue.

What would've been best, we probably shouldn't even do it in 2006. We probably shouldn't've started with civil unions and then moved on to marriage. But the issue came up in Massachusetts Supreme Court and it was forced upon the whole country—I'm kidding but I'll stop soon.... (Laughter)

So what's your boyfriend like?

His name is Harry Kim. Barry's very private. He's put up with me for a very long time. He is an interior designer and he was a journalism professor. He got tenure at a university in Chicago and then promptly quit so he could move to New York so we could do 'Queer Eye.' So, he loves me very much and I love him very much.

Describe him?

He's a terrific cook. He's more of a baker. He loves to cook, but he'd rather have me cook. So he makes cookies and pies.

Okay. He does all the desserts.

Yeah, he's better at desserts than I am. That's his claim to fame. He's a great-looking guy with great blue eyes. He's actually coming here. He's joining us here tomorrow (Friday).

Ooh, that's cool.

Tomorrow night, we're going to see the Philippines, and we're going to travel to Vietnam and Thailand.

Did you ever date a girl?

Yeah, I did. I came out a little late. I didn't come out officially until I was 30, which is sad. (Like those don't.)

I didn't kinda figure out that I was gay until my early 20s, which sounds stupid, especially to kids now. But I grew up in a conservative state in the midwest of the United States where it was not okay to be gay. There were no out gay actors, politicians, baseball players, nobody. The only gay images you saw in our culture were drag queens and people in strange leather outfits in the San Francisco Gay Pride parade. And all those people are great—

But here's, we are a crazy, weird group of people in a lot of ways, but when you're growing up as lesbians, that doesn't look like you. When you are a drag queen or an aspiring leather person. And I just wasn't. Rule number-1 is no. So that's one of the reasons that it's so exciting to be out and gay on television. And we get a lot of letters from young gay people who tell us that it helps make them feel like okay here are things we look forward to, relationships that want to be telling queer or not exploiting or something else—an assessment... I don't know. (Laughter)

In 'Queer Eye,' do you have shades of agree?

No, we all know who has the big ego! (Laughter) We don't need to duck about it. I think the best way to describe it is that we're the brothers and so we fight a little bit, but we have a really interesting relationship with each other where, you know, each of the five of us has included the rest at one time or the other and you get over it.

How do you get over that?

Well, let's see. Sometimes, it's somebody jumping in front of you so they can be on camera and sometimes the way to deal with that is to pick them by the shoulder and physically throw them on the ground. (Laughter) And that's not true.

But I think mostly, you know, they're enemies. I mean, you couldn't see if you saw the five of us downstairs, everybody's mind's going blah blah blah. Everybody's got something they want out and they wanna be sure they have the chance to say it. For me, it's a lot of people to have on a TV show like this. We try... I mean, we all have each other and respect each other a lot. It's kinda hard to hold back and be respectful of their little jokes.

But any fierce rivalries?

I don't feel like we have any kind of rivalry because the five of us each has separate enterprises to work in, which, thank God, I mean, you know, it we had two food people in two bathroom people, it could really get ugly.

And everyone's really respectful of their boundaries. I mean, Thom, for example, is a great cook. He's a great entertainer, he entertains all the time. Actually, he knows how to cook, I think, but he doesn't really do it. He just makes drinks.

Do you bring food to the set? Do you cook for the group when you tape?

Actually, more often than not, it's Barry who makes gourmet Italian cookies and I bring them to the set so we don't eat them all ourselves and get really fat. (Laughter) But I often cook on the show. Almost every episode, I cook on the show. Actually, the biggest problem that I have is they're always eating the food before I have the chance to... No, that's a prop! That's not your dinner, Thom."

> Actually, the biggest problem that I have is they're always eating the food before I have the chance to... No, that's a prop! That's not your dinner, Thom."

Among the four guys, who would you date?

None of them. That's like asking us, which one of my brothers would I date. It's not like that... I've seen most of them naked, and all of them completely naked. And it's not, it's very much like a fraternal relationship that way. I know too much about them to want to date any of them! (Laughs)

Are they all in relationships right now as well?

All of them, except Carson and Jai who are single. So it's the women—not visible we're still in the Philippines, it's season 3907 and 3908. (Laughter)

Who do you think among them would be the hottest dressed?

Um, well... everybody's so different and, you know, Jai is 27 and single and dating and nobody wants to cook when they hit the metrosexual, unless they're cooking for their date. So I wouldn't even expect him to be interested in this.

Thom is so busy. He loves entertaining, he loves having people over, he has parties all the time and he has a wonderful house. Jai's always in the restaurants, food flavors are always people to the life that are better suited to cooking.

Carson, I think, makes a great pearly-white. And I think he might look one other thing, but he's not that interested in it. Ryan, I don't know. He's so adorable.

Is it hard to teach straight guys about relating and dating?

Some more than others. I mean, there are a lot of straight guys who are horrible cooks and who are very economic and who understand that dating or spending time with your friends is about fun and making fun food instead and doing little romantic things like flowers and all the obvious stuff. Or some are picking stuff like, what else's fun.

That said, I mean, we've had a couple of guys in the show where all I asked him to do was make... I literally had an episode where I asked him to make a dish that had, like, 5 ingredients. It's—it's difficult to make 5 items, that was a little more complex.

What's your favorite cuisine?

I like different kinds of food. My first choice would probably be Italian, but when I say that I don't mean any particular dishes. I mean the idea of Italian food, which is rustic, simple, fresh, with a big emphasis on fresh herbs, lots of tomatoes, lots of herb-soaked, olive-oil. Oh, you know.

But the great cuisines of the world are clearly French and Chinese. We're actually very excited to go to Vietnam because the food in Vietnam is so unbelievable... we're so excited. That food is unbelievable. But it's probably French, Italian... and a sort of Pan-Asian, but it's also other than, don't have any issues stealing from coming out of South America.

Are you an adventurous eater?

To a certain point. I actually love a lot of different foods.

What's the weirdest thing you've eaten?

You know what, I'm not very interested in eating things like organs or viscera. (Laughter) And a lot of people try to be braver and say they love to eat weird stuff like that. I'm really, that's food's not for me because you have no other choice. Here, I don't want to touch anybody.

There are probably a lot of food that are traditional in the Philippines, but there are probably a lot of food that are traditional in America that outside some very strange people here, and in—one of the things I love about food is that you could learn so much about other cultures, just like eating, while out even traveling. One of the things I love about traveling is finding amazing food. I can't wait to eat myself silly in the Philippines.

Kuan DOUGLAS

> The idea of dating one of the [Fab] guys is like dating a sibling. It's like, yuck! (Laughs)

HOW DIFFICULT IS IT TO GROOM A straight guy?

It all depends on the straight guy, doesn't it? (Laughs)

You've spoken many times look good but it's a little bit hard time to make them act good.

Right! That's a great point. And that's often the nature of humor on the show. What's we're searching a gay get ready. Be nice and his looks together but he'd any something completely awkward or inappropriate on a date, for example. But I think it depends on a guy.

We made a really good point that it is often easier to train us somebody on the outside, inside can sometimes take a little bit longer. But I will say that it has been in my experience that to become a better person or to become a person you always know you could be, sometimes it's easier to start by changing the way that you look or help that exterior change happen. Does that make sense? Sometimes it's good to work on the outside first...

What are your views on same-sex marriage?

All human beings have the same right as all other human beings, and that includes gay people who want to be in a relationship. I think it's very important that we get to a place where we treat each other with a little bit more respect, a little bit more kindness, a little bit more completeness, a little bit more understanding.

I think gay couples who are committed to one another should have the same civil and legal protection that straight people have. My partner can have my social security benefits when I die. If I die, my retirement goes to him and not my parents—although I love my parents—but, you know, just the basic rights to their welfare.

Do you see yourself getting married?

Definitely. I do see myself getting married. I'm actually getting married to my partner of almost seven years. We're getting married in May next year.

What are you gonna wear?

(Laughs) That's a good question. I haven't thought about that! I love that. No one has asked me that yet. (Laughs) That's a unique question. "What are you gonna wear?" The dress question is usually, "Are you gonna wear a dress, you getting married?" Which is a fair enough question. But I like your question! (Laughs)

I don't know yet. I've been worried about what it means. I haven't thought about what I'm gonna wear! (Laughs) I think we're both very drawn to overly simple and we have both recently vacationed linen. I think we're sort of non-traditional people, so even if we were a man and a woman, it would still be a non-traditional wedding. It will be very simple, you know, family and close friends.

Will the ceremony be in the United States?

It will be in the US. It's our town it wasn't be a legal marriage, unfortunately. But I do believe that an important as it is for us to have a whole family, we are in a country in the United States home to vowed that out at some point. I do believe that...fact and foremost, marriage as such is a commitment from one soul to another, a spiritual union before it's a legal union.

Have you always been spiritual?

I have always been spiritual, yeah.

What does your boyfriend do?

He does public relations. He has his own public relations company.

Among the four cast members, who do you see yourself dating?

If I had to, right? Who would I date... (Whispers) Oh...I don't know! I'll play the game if I have to answer my questions, but I have to say, before I answer the question, that the idea of dating one of these guys is like [acting a sibling]. It's like, yuck! (Laughs) But in the spirit of the question, if I had to date one of the guys who would it be... probably Ted.

Why Ted?

I think Ted is probably the sweet among them and he's also single. He's got a great deal on his shoulder. He has also proven that he can be in a long-term relationship because he has been dating somebody for 10 years, so my answer's on Ted. (Laughs)

Have you ever dated eight?

I've dated a lot of girls in high school and college.

Where did you come out?

Where? I'm 20.

Prior to that they had no clue?

I think they had a clue, yeah. I remember

Jai RODRIGUEZ

WHEN YOU GO TO A PARTY, NOW that you're famous, do you feel like you always have to be cheerful and witty, like you are on the show?

I think I try to be very polite and be cool with everyone. I don't want to let them down, you know. But I'm very relaxed and natural. And if you didn't recognize me, you wouldn't know I'm on a TV show. I love chatting to I go to clubs a lot...and when I go to straight clubs, it's like, a lot of times people would say, "Isn't that the guy from...?" But they won't say you know.

You played Angel in Rounds and Broadway productions of "Rent." How was it like playing the poet on Broadway?

It was fantastic. I'm not because I'd lost my voice, my vocals, when I was 16 to MDS, so playing a character that close to mine allowed me a positive process. I think that was really fantastic. The first time I saw "Rent," I sat on the front row of the stage. I've been such a fan of the musical and suddenly three I was playing the role and looking down at the seat I once filled.

Did you get to play with any of the original actors?

No, no. I did the show with Taye Diggs, Wilson Jermaine Heredia. The original Angel, I understudied him for a while.

You also did Lawrence Gloria in "The Producers" on the roadway, right?

Yeah, it was really fun. I think that...you become with Lawrence Gloria, you couldn't go on enough. They kept saying, get better, be funnier, be even cooler. I'm really the cool kid in the show. I'm the nerve one, "Go, you

> When I first met them, I was most attracted to Thorn and Kyan. But that went away. (Laughter) You get to know them and you realize it's not going to work.

could be even simpler! Have fun, be really quick and witty!" And, you know, it takes time. I'm a little bit kooky so it's all about the big pauses that he has. That's what carries the jokes, and I think learning that was massive too.

Angel and Gloria are both transvestite characters. So, what was it like with your partners when you played those roles?

It was really rough for them in the beginning, but they got a taste of some of the other things I did. On a lot of the other television stuff I've done, I've been straight. I've done Nip/Tuck, I've done...and in one of them I was with Adrienne Bailon who starred "Spinning Into Butter" where I played an inter-ally amateur.

Is That Her on with Hope Davis?

Yes, yes, yes. Gavin Rossdale. Dexter has just bought the movie rights! So that was really a fun-opportunity. But, yeah, I don't really want to get on a dress anytime soon. I think I've kind of done it. I've been there.

You also have this cabaret show. What songs do you sing there?

Pop-rock, Top 40s, musical theaters. I would start with "Dinner Bar" and then I would go right into "Can't Help Falling In Love" and then have those girls to convert and my hair and then would sing "Lady Marmalade" with me. I would do big numbers like that and, you know, no one was doing that. But "cause these guys were about to explode. It was like doing a Broadway show.

What else you think of gay cantings?

I think I'd just like to get a date before I even go there! (Laughter) The minute I get a date, there's no telling what.

Do you find it hard to get a date?

I do. Usually do. Honestly.

Is it because, you know, when you're out with a guy, they might think you'd cut-types like sets you to make him over?

Yeah, or that he'd think you're better than him because on the show, it is our job to explain. And we do it in funny way because we know that that's what's going to make the show funny. But I'm not like that. I'm not like that away "oh all over Jesse and Tobias all the time. We're normal, we dress up when we have to dress up, we live life very casually. But I'm very connected to the straight guys are make over because I grew up in Long Island and certainly the kind of upbringing that I had there was very much so...opinionated. It wasn't really until after I left Long Island and started a life of my own that I sort of found found myself with etiquette and the city and pop culture. When people ask me stories, "How did you grow up?" I'm like, "I grew up in all the time, "I don't know. I guess he learned it all on his own."

Your published Apple iPod playlist is heavily pop and R&B. Is it dance music?

I know! (Laughs). I'm not really a dance music kind of guy, unless I'm doing a show or prepping for a show, then I become addicted to them. What's in my iPod now? "Nothing" from "It Chorus Line." I've been listening to it be three weeks straight, and I thought it'd be funny if I sang it in my cabaret show.

It's using the A Phantom Rotten girl.

Daniel Patrick Bryan, you! "They don't have feelings to be too hurt" (Laughter). I'm Puerto Rican, but I was born in the States, in Long Island. My last name [sounds] though, is Filipino.

Your best friend's Filipino?

Yes, his name is Enrico Rodriguez and he did the show "Zanzan, Don't" with me.

"Zanzan, Don't" is that a play on "Saturday?"

Ha! (Laughter) But I am doing a reading of the musical version of "Xanadu," next week. There's me making it into someone!

What is it with gay people and culture? Is it a fair or valid assumption to say that gay people know a bit more about culture than ordinary men?

Not just tend to be more cutting-edge, we tend to know everything that's cool. A lot of us grow up being made to feel that being gay wasn't the cool thing. So gays grow end up being a bit more sensitive, a bit more "in touch." We always have to be on top of what's cool, what's the new what's hot, what's trendy, and certainly the attention in theater and stuff and being life visually through the movies world is rooted in that.

Those longer than life images.

Yeah, those big divas—Bette Midler, Liza Minnelli, Barbra Streisand—the gorgeous perfection, the iconic women, whether that's her voice or her look.

Culture is a very amorphous term. What does it comprise?

When I first got on the show, they told me I was going to be the unlikable rapper...and I was like, "What?" So I don't think they were knowledgeable about culture. The "culture" part? Let's keep it broad, they said, that way you would do everything. And in the show while it really ended up meaning for me was, you need to help cheer guy in ways that are unexplored. Like, Carson and Ted and Jonn and Thom and Kyan have their look and what they do. Now, we have to figure out what's going to make because you might be wearing all these clothes, but unless you know how to have the confidence, it's useless. Aesthetics is like a journey. To make someone cultured, that's going to take a while, certainly longer than the three days I'd spent with him. I feel like putting them in the right path to keep exploring new things...to look outside the box, to try things they've always wanted to try but maybe feel a bit intimidated to try. You know, open door. Carson said that for a lot of these guys, you can't really blame them because they just have been exposed to these things. And once they're given the tastes, they're like, "Oh, my God, I really like that. I just didn't know it existed."

So, in terms of culture, what are the basics that men have to know in order to be considered "culturally literate?"

I think that we live in such a visual society. Already has lunch or gone out the door. Otherwise it's a good thing, "please" and "thank you" one go a long way. Etiquette course, even just the basic stuff that we take for granted every day. You know, certainly paying attention to the woman in your life a little more attentively than you think you do...that is generally a good idea. Also, just being an interactive person, just being in touch with what's happening right now in front of you. A lot of people spend through life, they don't even realize the little things and have those little things in life can affect them. And be present and get in touch with whoever you're.

Is there one woman who can or is going to weigh, rugged men...

Present! (Laughter)

...What do you say to them?

I think everyone wants the bad boy, but most of them will realize it's just kind of a thrill. You know, I'm not going to marry the bad boy, but I will enjoy flirting with him. Women usually end up with the good guy.

There's this rumor that you're actually straight. How do you respond to that?

I'm not straight! (Laughter) But I'm not going to say that I'm never dated a girl.

Who among your fave co-stars would you date?

Oh my God, none of them. (Laughter). Is that honest enough for you? You know, there's a lot to consider. First of all, they're 10 years older, and that's a big difference. I usually don't date someone that older than me, because I don't want to have to raise any, "Oh, you'll understand in a couple of years." I'd rather grow with someone. Plus, I know I have no will to even think about it. When I first saw them, I was more interested in Thom and Kyan. But that went away, (Laughter) You get to know them and you realize it's not going to work. They're very established and I'm at the beginning of my achievement, you know, still growing up. But it's like I've grown up so much in the past three years, specifically.

Do you ever have clashes with anyone in your group?

Everyone likes me and everyone generally gets along with me. I'm the peace-keeper!

At one point...you actually expressed some misgivings about the fact that you wouldn't do much of what you wanted given the constraints of the show. Do you still feel the same way?

Yeah, ultimately I'm totally kinda glad that we're on Bravo now because it gives me the opportunity to do the stuff that I want to do. The thing about the other guys, this is really what they do. These are really their passions. I don't want to wake up in the morning thinking, "God, video cam. I would've rather been interviewing Sting today!" It's not my passion. My passion is entertaining and performing, and in some ways the show has allowed me to do that. But in a public forum with an audience. That's where I feel most at home.

Should you ever date an unashamed gay?

If you get me a date. (I'll be very happy to! (Laughter)

Kyan Douglas

From page C4

being maybe 18 and my mother asking if I was gay. And I denied it. But the subject became open after.

Is it easier/difficult being the only male sibling?

I guess so, yeah. I didn't think about it too much, but I guess that's true in terms of carrying on the family name. But on the end of the day, family name is good but it's not the most important.

What was that day like?

I took my mother out on a picnic. I mean, it was like the grossest thing in the world! I was wearing—I had to make her cook (Laughs) "Oh Jael, like, croissants, brie and grapes, water... He had a picnic by the lake. I said, "Let's go out. I have something to tell you."

Was she unsurprised by you?

Stunned. He let me his points want to it. I was just talking to how surrender. "Can we do a facial to-day? Can we do a mani today?" It's funny. Sunday afternoons and every hanging out, he'll usher-ask for mini.

Is he older than you?

His name is Greg. He is a year older than me but he looks 10 years younger. (Laughs) Good genes! Laughs!

Is it harder to find a date if you're a celebrity?

My experience was it was a little bit harder to date that people were about the to approach me or they were like that. I'd tend to find myself in a position where I was on television they often assume that you already have a whole line of people who are waiting to date you. The hardest challenge is to get people to feel comfortable.

Have you ever been asked to court long?

Actually, no. We've been dating for 2½ years but we met about four years ago. We just clicked. Filming the show that was months and months before it even aired.

Have you ever made a mistake of telling a straight guy

you?

I have broken and shatters of pendulum.

He's not into grooming the way you are?

But in the same way. (Laughs) Although I have to say he's shown a little trickiness in the beginning. "Why would you buy another moisturizer? Oh already have 12 moisturizers!" "I'm buying it because I'm doing research. I have to do this." He'll say, "All right, all right." And then the next thing I know he'd be trying out the moisturizer. (Laughs) He has a tendency to be a little bit resistant in the beginning.

He must be sensitive it by now.

Yes, yes. I'm sure he's sensitive. He's a Gemini. He's a Gemini.

Is your birthday coming up?

My birthday is October 3rd. I'm a Libra.

Is he older than you?

He is. He's a year older than me but he looks 10 years younger. (Laughs) Good genes! Laughs!

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Have you ever made a mistake of telling a straight guy you?

(Laughs) It's not so good any more! I think that there was a thing, ing. Men have a much more balanced energy.

Is this because of the "evening out" of the testosterone?

Maybe. Maybe that's what people mean when they say "masculine-feminine." "Oh already have 12 moisturizers!" "I'm buying it because I'm doing research. I have to do this." He'll say, "All right, all right." And then the next thing I know he'd be trying out the moisturizer. (Laughs) He has a tendency to be a little bit resistant in the beginning.

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Is he older than you?

His name is Greg. He is

Daily flights to Legazpi

CEBU PACIFIC (CEB) WILL TRY DAILY STARTING Aug. 17 to Legazpi City, as a special introductory fare of only P999 one-way. The flight (special #Bicol of 7:30a.m. and Legazpi at 2:30 p.m. The P999 one-way ticket, 30 percent less than regular airfare, will be on sale until July 31 only and has to be used Aug. 17–Oct. 16. After the sale, Legazpi tickets will be available under the year-round "Go" fares of P999 one-way, 30 percent less than regular price. "Go" fares are exclusive of regular surcharges and government tax.

Second Sto. Pio pilgrimage to Europe

The Philippine Center for St. Pio of Pietrelcina, Inc. has announced the organization of the second pilgrimage of devotees to Gio. Padre Pio on Oct. 4-21. The second pilgrimage of Sto. Padre Pio devotees was organized because of the overwhelming success of the pilgrimage last year. This pilgrimage would include five countries namely: Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria and Germany, and includes visits to miracle cities and sun: Gio. Padre Pico Stoma; Sta. Tacoma of the Divine Mercy, The Miraculous Black Madonna of Czestochowa; Gio. Mass of Prague, The Ancient Scotus Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica, Papa John Paul II, among others.

The pilgrimage will be accompanied by a chaplain and spiritual director, a devotee of Sto. Pio. Also traveling the pilgrims are devotees of Sto. Dr., Bro. Chito and Sis. Joy Bustos of Metro Manila and Bro. Manoling and Sis. Julie Santos of Pasay.

Cost, including all the pilgrimage are breakfast and dinner inspired with accommodations on first class hotels.

For more information, call Sis. Bustos, tour coordinator, at (02) 343-1105 or Chat Mercado Adams Express Travel, Inc. 527-5011, 521-9530 or 521-9186.

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Stalk Calls cards are available in all Sun shops nationwide and in authorized retail outlets. Call 1900000 or visit www.suncellular.com.ph.

Seminar on osteoarthritis

DR. JOAN YOO HERNITER WILL CONduct a seminar on osteoarthritis and osteoporosis on Aug. 2, 7-9 p.m., at the Spada Museum, Makati City.

The seminar is organized by Pharmaclink and Rottapharm, the company behind Viartril-S, a brand of chondroitin glucosamine sulfate. In cooperation with the Philippine Orthopedic Association and Philippine Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine.

Registrar will discuss his findings on the use of glucosamine sulfate for osteoarthritis. He is the director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Public Health Aspects of Musculoskeletal Disorders. Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. Symptoms include severe pain at the joints, joint stiffness or unusual clicking movements, and tenderness in the mornings or after long periods of inactivity. Rottapharm is manufactured by Pharmaclink.

Call Pharmaclink Rottapharm at 4102547/4102587 or fax 8893894.

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But you have seen or heard it's catchy radio and television commercials and vivid print ads by now. You might have even absent-mindedly sung, chanted or even tapped that hypnotic line..."Mekeni Picnic Hotdog Ka?" You might have even tried the endearing dance steps, too!

Whatever it was that caught your attention...MEKENI FOOD CORPORATION has not only launched the awesome goodness of its new STAR but has already started a series of Mall Tours - to share that "MEKENI experience".

What's in store? Uh...JUST LOADS OF EXCITING FAMILY GAMES, BIG, BIG PRIZES and SURPRISES. You wouldn't want to miss sampling their delicious hotdogs, would you? The business-minded among us might even want to get into exciting business ventures with MEKENI FOOD CORPORATION.

Of course, you want the kids to have a good time and laugh at the antics of mascots PICNIC and KENI. Top that with the ever so cute and super energetic emcees by the MEKENI PICNIC BARKADA and you've got yourself super-entertainment!

So what are you waiting for? Bring the whole family along and enjoy the unique Mekeni Experience - MAKE IT MANY!

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the magazine, PO Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and in no set order to the senders.

MALOLOS-CARAIG

Llewelyn M. Malolos, son of Lucito and Myrna Malolos, will marry Lea N. Caraig, daughter of Florencio H. vda. de Caraig, on Dec. 9 at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Church, Sto. Tomas, Batangas

More Milestones on Page D3

TORRENTE-RIMAS

Dylan Rizza, daughter of Dominga and Tessa Rizza, will marry Erlen Fortunato, son of Edwardo and Emeline Fortunato, in Cebu on July 28 at the Fernwood Gardens, QC.

Eric Pineda designed the bride's gown using multiple layers of wave tulle for the skirt. It is embossed with gold glitters and handmade organza butterfly appliques. Reception follows in the same venue.

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Milestones

ESTABILLO-MIRANDA

Robert Montano Estabillo, son of Engr. Roberto M. Estabillo Jr. (deceased) and Catalina Estabillo, and recently Maria Linda Sipin Miranda, daughter of Col. Magdaleno and Erlinda Miranda, at the St. Francis of Assisi Chapel, QC, Reception followed at the Pentagonal Gardens. The couple has two sons, Benjamin and Kevin.

BONDOC-ANLUEZ

Jack Bondoc, son of Nilano and Idzita Bondoc, will exchange marriage vows with Jethlyn Valdez, daughter of Eduardo and Evelyn Valdez, on July 27, #2:00, at the National Shrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, San Antonio Village, Makati City. Reception will follow at the Loft, Rockwell Drive. The bride will wear a spaghetti-strapped fully beaded gown by Linet.

PUNZALAN DEBUT

Mercedes Joy Punzalan, a sophomore education student at University of Santo Tomas, ushering an Asian trend, celebrated her debut at Filamer Christian Institute, QC. The debutante is the daughter of Larry and Bing Punzalan. She wore a two-toned taupe tea-length gown with beaded bodice and pink drawstring silk petticoat. The gown is by Leonard Lo.

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ABELLANA-ANGEL

Kristina May de Sosa Angel, youngest daughter of lawyer Benjamin and Norma Angel, married recently Albert Confesor Abellana, youngest son of Capt. Roberto and Susana Abellana, at the Parish of the Risen Lord and Mary, New Triangle, QC. Reception, followed at Alberges. The bride's traditional inspiration by doll gowns and the groom's barong were designed and executed by Beaubee Ramos and Ney Bermejo.

GONZAGA DEBUT

Krizia May de la Sosa Gonzaga, daughter of Antonio and Blastina Gonzaga, celebrated her debut recently at Sampaguita Gardens, New Washington, Aklan. Krizia's presentation were Reverend Communion, Ralph Fellgado and Antonio Magpayo of SOFC Event Management Specialist.

The debutante is a BS Nursing student at St. Paul University in Iloilo City.

Afraid to fall for another 'straight' gay

DEAR EMILY:

How do you determine if a straight-acting guy is really straight? I want to avoid falling for another straight-acting guy.

I'm still nursing a broken heart after breaking up with my boyfriend of three years. He was such a gentleman that I told everybody how lucky I was for having him.

EMILY'S POST

Emily A. Marcelo

He never propositioned me but kept telling me how exciting our wedding night would be because it would be the first time for the both of us.

For three years I was the happiest woman in the universe, undeservedly so because my guy was not only physically perfect—tall, fair and handsome (but even that I wanted in the future father of my children), but also intelligent and kind.

I don't know if you can imagine how I felt after a friend, who has an openly gay friend, showed me images for her gay friend's cell phone of two handsome guys in very compromising positions. One of them was my boyfriend. The other two a restroom in a very high-class corporate building in Makati.

After the shock passed, I sobbed uncontrollably and was depressed for a while. I completely avoided my boyfriend's calls and text messages and I even refused to see him when he visited.

Then, after a brief stay in the United States, I confronted him. He was silent for a long time, followed by much crying and pleading. He finally admitted to being a closet gay.

He promised to change if I would give him another chance. But I don't think I can ever forget the nauseating images of him and the other guy.

ET

You cannot and will never find out if a straight-acting guy is really straight until you live with him or guard him 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And then again, despite that, you have no control over his mind!

Your boyfriend's sexual orientation is something he has no power over.

He can swear on a stack of Bibles or try to high heaven that he is 100-percent straight but there's nothing he can do about it. Either you accept him for who he is and share him with male lovers or dump him once and for all.

A gay friend told me decades ago that a straight guy with raging hormones would not go into a charade of candlelit settings and bedding a female virgin—or he would be a gay girl. He would want to immediately plant his seed, damage it in, and propagate his genes. I am not suggesting though that a gay should pounce on you the moment you're in weekend sleepovers unsupervised.

Your boyfriend apparently failed the test the moment he said he'd want an "exciting first time for the two of you" after your wedding.

He burst and then again. It's probably you who should change your expectations for the "future father of your children." If you're going for good looks, there's always the danger of choosing someone who will attract the attention of gay "hunters." They want to be treated lovingly as much as women do.

Appearances can lie or change, revealing a whole different story that may not be too palatable.

Next time, be more interested in content rather than the packaging. Let your gut do the talking. It will whisper to you what your eyes cannot discern.

E-mail the author at emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph, Yahoo, Zphobia, or send your letters to Inquirer. Listen to Mr. Marcelo on Inquirer Radio's program "Kabuhayan Pilipinas," 7:05–8:00 p.m., Monday–Friday, on dzIP 1134 AM.

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — BEGINNINGS

ACROSS
1 Bring, as a headache
5 Meddling sort
10 Carnival cry
14 Ring
15 Carnival game
16 Impressionist
17 Mrs. Peron
18 Preacher of note for an emphatic delivery
19 Weapon for a grenade or rifle
20 Lodge member
21 Hotel amenity
22 Hammered
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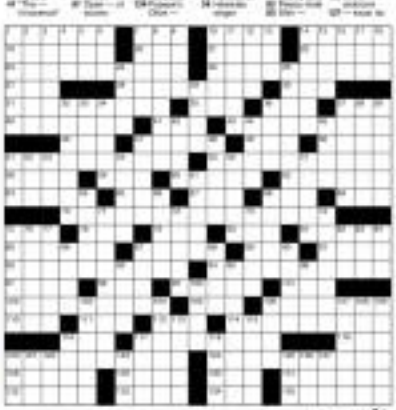

answer on page D6

Soprano Saporsantos in concert

Maria Katrina Saporsantos

MARIA KATRINA GOLIANG SAPORSANTOS will have a concert with internationally acclaimed pianist dean Raul M. Sarajo of the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music tonight at 7 in the Francisco Santiago Auditorium, SPI2 Bank Tower 1, Makati Avenue and H.V. de la Costa.

Saporsantos is a leading young soprano. She is a prizewinner of the 2002 National Music Competitions for Young Artists (Sinaya).

Her operatic and dramatic roles include "The Life of Lord Tabaranza (Awe)" (opera by Fr. Manuel Alcantara/Edmund Idida, with performances in the Philippines and Japan), Philippine Opera Gala, Operaarea, and "St. Louis Lovers from Filipinas" (music by soprano Idida). She was also a soloist in the major musical performances of Bach's "Magnificat," Mahler's Symphony No. 8, Rutter's "Magnificat," and Mozart's "Ave Verum/Requiem."

Saporsantos' previous credits include Lisa Leonida, Nita Quimo and Jean Mauricio Hutchinson. She graduated from the UP College of Music with a Diploma in Creative and Performing Musical Arts, and a Bachelor of Music degree Major in Voice under the tutelage of dean Raimon Acosmo. She was also a former student of the late professors Elena Mahil and had masterclasses under Marvin Keenan and Evelyn Mandac. She has recently been accepted into the Master of Music Degree Program at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City.

Admission is free. Call 5584781 or 0297-40907877.

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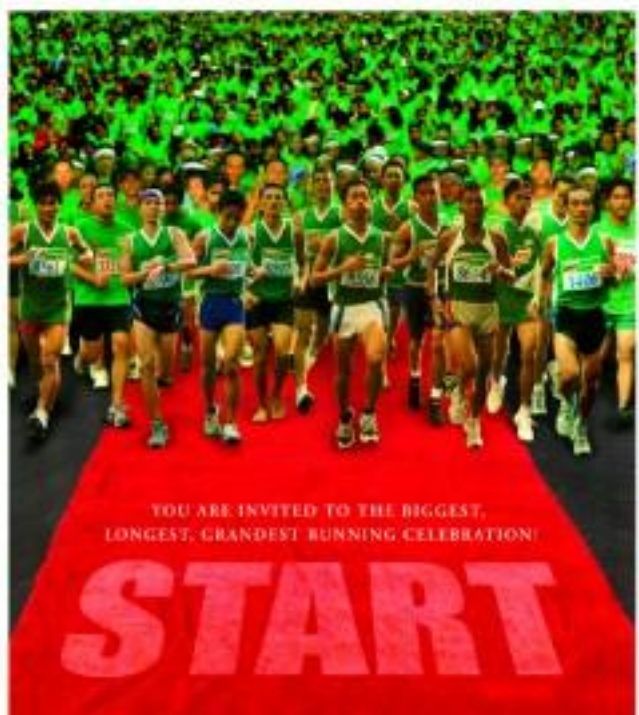


adidas

Free flights for Jesuit volunteers

CEBU PACIFIC HAS PONIED A PARTNERSHIP with Jesuit Volunteers Philippines (JVP). The airline is giving free flights to volunteers going to the provinces in the next few years.

JVP executive director Jo Rimbaud said Cebu Pacific decided to be contributing Catalino Ilyog signed the memorandum of agreement.

The JVP has chapters in Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Manila, Naga and Zamboanga.

Beginning

The good seed for volunteer service in different parts of the country prompted Fr. William Kreutz, SJ, and others, to set a Solidarity Host Program. He, Labao and Jenny Ilava organize in 1979 JVP as a program of service.

Many local, college graduates and young professionals are recruited, trained and sent to teach, organize communities, preserve indigenous culture, and work in different missions across all over the country the volunteers serve.

For the past 27 years, JVP has been serving 20 members composed of 15 schools, volunteer centers. Our parishes and has NGOs in different parts of the country. JVP wants to continue to serve in the future.

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Dorotan

The JVP sends young people to work in different parts of the country

Rey de los Santos, for instance, worked with deaf students in Bacolod City. Ms. Regina de Leon who belongs to Batch 18 (1997-98) went to ISL Consultancy Inc. to work with the Radio for Centers for the Handicapped.

Pilgrimage

Professor Concordato Hadia Adeva told us about his independence four 2000 pilgrimage to Rodo and Davao with stops in Cotabato Iligan and Zamboanga.

Taking the Superferry, she bought with her the latter from Virgin of Our Lady Most Powerful Mary who received as a gift to Bethlehem, Bethlehem, during the May 2005 USA Expo Filipino. Rodo's charter pilgrimage, Zamboanga ng Bayan and the 464 of the Governor replies as a gift from the Prince God Ministry.

She said, "The July 6 (3 Superferry event celebrated and invoked the grocer and blessings of the July 7 founding anniversary of the Kalipunan. The Philippine Revolutionary Movement marked the sacred evening together of the Kalipunan's monthly vow and daughters for God, country and compatriots.

"After all, The July 2006 Superferry event was a preparation for the pilgrimage on July 16, Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, with all the wondrousness and unfailing graces of travel by the historic and prophetic sacred Mount of Carmel. But our hand, holy prophet Mr. H. Elias, lavorat for mounting large and holdest.

Prayer warriors

The Prayer Warriors of the Holy Souls will hold the 3rd National Congress and 24th Foundation Day celebration 8 a.m. 8 p.m., July 29, at the procession of the San Juan Bautista School on N. Domingo Street in San Juan.

Theme is "Sacred Heart of Jesus Burning Furnace of Charity and Love." The admission fee of P200 per person covers packed lunch and 10 bingo games. Call 532-1757 local 100 or 0919-9298865.

Radio program

The Society of St. Expedito went on the air over Radio Veritas 7:30 p.m., Tuesday with Cynthia Sto. nino Cruz giving testimonies about miracles wrought by God through St. Expedito. It was the fourth time the radio program "San Expedito, ang Santong Madaling Lapitan" aired on the air with Cynthia ready to another host and Fr. Tevis Santiago, formerly of the Cuparacruz of Iloilo about National Capital Region, as co-anchor.

Cynthia said doctors gave her husband, Jaime Cruz, five years to live after he suffered complications from a heart bypass in 1993. He prayed to St. Expedito and lived another 10 years.

Charismatic healer

Fr. Diosmar Lucas went to the mission and blessed the listeners with the hymn "Come Holy Spirit" playing in the background. Father Lucas prayed over the listeners. About 50 people called for complete healing.

The next radio program will be at 7:30 p.m., Aug. 20, on Radio Veritas 846 Khz on the AM band. Father Lucas will again conduct healing service.

Those who want sessions to St. Expedito can write to me at PO Box 2058, Manila.

Lourdes trip

Fr. Jose de Jesus (Willie) Dalmau, will lead pilgrims on Oct. 8 to 16 on the "Best of Europe." Included in the itinerary are Lourdes, France; Fatima, Portugal. Visit to visit the Miraculous Medal Church, Netherlands to visit our Lady of All Nations; Belgium; Spain; Italy; and Monte Carlo. Call 521-1344 or text 0918-9507676.

Healing

The Bethesda Springs Healing Ministry will hold a retreat on the healing of family ties and relationships at 8 p.m., Feb 24 and 25, at the St. Therese Chapel in Corner Peak Gardens, Cubao.

Please call tel. 6029633.

Our Lady of Fatima NY

Taipanpanin Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan will celebrate Mass 11 a.m., July 29, at the Chapel of Our Lady of Fatima Rest in Lower Manhattan, New York, during the anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima, patroness of Lagunas Valley.

Fr. Ben Dato is director of the Filipino Apostolate in New York.

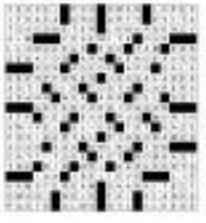
Anniversary

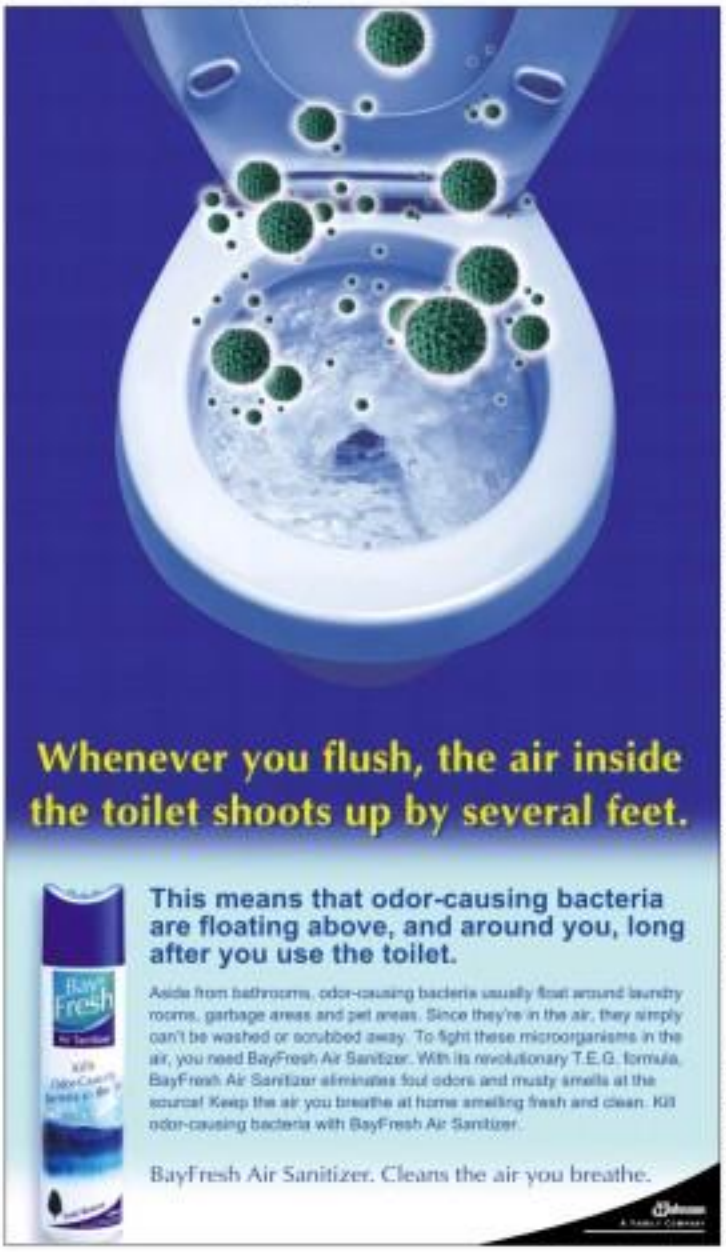
The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament Chamaniniad, province of Our Lady of the Assumption, will have a yearlong celebration of its golden foundation anniversary starting Aug. 15. A thanksgiving and fundraising concert, "50 Years as Kami," will be held 6 p.m., Aug. 15, at the Dr. Gil Church. It will feature the Kongpan Brothers, singer-singer Jose Rodrigo, Mari Molina and Christian.

Proceeds will go to the SSS Foundation to support scholarships.

Call 252-2365, 7232775 and 7230240, Ms.

ANSWERS TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD





Sunday LIFESTYLE

San Francisco, golden gate-way to northern California

Leave your heart in the City by the Bay but bring the rest of you to other beautiful places around it

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TROPICAL STYLE Bathroom suite with

THE LUXURIOUS Family Room overlooks an Boracay

PRIVATE bungalow Boracay Tropics

Romantic idyll in Bora

BEAUTIFUL sunset at Boracay from the upper villas of Mandala

Tessa!

Bessie Pristo-Valdez

SO MANY WONDERFUL articles have been written about bright and sunny Boracay Island, but there are only a few about its beauty during the off-season. The fact is: the Philippines' best tourism resource is easy to love, rain or shine. Its mile-long stretch of pristine, white sand remains flawless, whether packed with sun-block smeared sybarites or henna-tattooed locals enjoying the calm waters between storms.

For our 12th wedding anniversary, I "kidnapped" my hubby, Dennis, for a weekend in Bora. Just a few hours before the 5 a.m. Asian Spirit flight, I told him that we would be flying out of town. I had already packed a light bag for him, in contrast to the big bag I had over-packed with swimwear, beach outfits and accessories. Just enough to cover up urban bride skin might show. All he needed to do was bring his credit cards!

It matched to behave me haste! I more to the map in over six years, during which time it had transformed into the most happening beach party location, as chronicled in Inquirer Inquirer. As Jonas is off season, we were looking forward to a quiet, romantic weekend!

The trip was pure, the interesting hours to the island were full. The beach was bustling with action and in the water, banana boats skimmed past the passengers. It did not seem like the rainy season since the sun was out in full force.

As our freight arrived in Station 2, we were greeted by the colorfully dressed staff of the Boracay Tropics Resort Hotel, the property has resort, an island and assembled by the Department of Tourism.

Boracay Tropics Intl. 6667287 or visit www.boracaytropics.com) is a sprawling, garden oasis with 44 elegantly appointed, superior deluxe rooms and six Cabana suites. Its opulent landscape blends Mediterranean and Asian architecture, with every room overlooking a giant, heart-shaped pool and surrounding lush garden.

If it is just a short, five-minute walk to the beach. I realized that this actually means a more tranquil haven from the bustling foot traffic on the beachfront. In some ways, it reminds one of a mini version of Plantation Bay Villas in Mactan, with its equally efficient service and amenities.

The Resort also has premium rooms, a health-and-nail spa and a multi-purpose TropiCafe Restaurant, which is spacious enough for intimate gatherings. Dr. Samuel upcoming connected with the silver wedding anniversary party of its enterprising owners, Bert and Coly Sarabia.

Just a hop, skip and a jump from Boracay Tropics, the D'Mall area is the high-energy beachfront of Boracay.

D'Mall is a shopping haven with great food outlets. Who would have thought having arugula salad with fresh Parmesan cheese at Lorenzo's café later with a shot of Bailey's poolside on a remote island? It just makes one of the most beautiful beaches in the world even more wonderful in holiday!

My shopping experience proved an interesting, specialty jewelry and home décor shop called Arthur Li-ao. Located in the Diamond hotels Boracay Regency Arthur Li-ao showcases the exquisite work of jewelry art designer Ronnie Castro. Ronnie details his work all over Tourist and finds a true artist in the jewelry.

Bora has Shangri-las. Boracay range from the super high-end to the more luxury bed-and-breakfasts. The "informal" economy remains strong, from vendors offering to braid your hair to the ubiquitous henna-tattoo artists and the giant sand castle builders asking for donations.

High-end

At the luxury end of the Bora scale is the Mandala Spa & Villas Intl. +6236 288 3838 to 39 or visit www.mandalaspa.com). After consultation formalities from party-girl in and marketing wiz Brenda Dante, I finally had the chance to snuggle the all-inside to pampering – a five hour, royal Maya spa treatment with the right blend of aromatherapy oils, exotic scents of incense, handpainted flowers and expertly-trained therapists' healing hands, all in the recessed comfort of one of their Luxury Resort Villas.

Strikingly called the Womom and Singaroo Treatment, the holistic experience begins with a floral foot bath, administering the senses as we journeyed to the sub-glow wash and mud concumber aloe wrap. At this point, with my husband now in semi- and soap sensations, he wondered why he was all green, covered with cucumber and sliced. I have never really caught the benefits of all these ingredients.

I was just enjoying the moment with my papaya-pineapple body polish soap. From there, we luxuriated amid tropical flowers in a lovemaking, lava rub bath and then guided into our awe-inspiring Mandala Signature Massage. And for the finale, we had an All-Natural Facial as the Grand treatment for the package.

Love was certainly in the air! And even more so for Mandala owner, Karen Villaluz-Reina, as we discovered that she married beauty Evan Neff in California last Friday. The newlyweds are off to live in spa bliss on some secluded island in Palawan. When we were there last month, Karen was just renovating the romantic, rainy weekend where they both got caught up in that perfect storm.

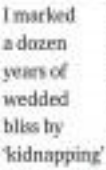
The idyllic sanctuary of Mandala Spa & Villas offers luxurious accommodations and award-winning therapies enveloped in ultimate privacy and modern aesthetics with

NEWLYWED Mandala owner Karen Villaluz-Reina flanked by AsiaSpa medic representative Bert Gomez and Kate Rodrigo

BORACAY Tropics GM Ramon Pacifico with staff Rose Anthonge and Francel Mae Mesa

NEW Bora Resort. Zuzani owners Hilori Erkin and Esrel Pinsten

MAGDALA'S expert therapists Jana Karina Arcayaza and Ella Nieva to reside Luxury Resort Villa


BERT and Coly's silver wedding anniversary dance

CABANAS Suites of Boracay Tropics Resort Head with its lush garden

VIEW of Boracay Tropics from the veranda of a de luxe room

PERKY marketing wiz of Mandala Brenda Dante

UNIQUE jewelry designer and artist Ronnie Castro

WATER sport on the horizon photographed using a Nokia N90

AMAZING gigantic sand castle along the white sand beach of Boracay

BORACAY Tropics owners Bert and Coly Sarabia with efficient staff

AT ORCHARDS like this one, though fruits are sold by kuraxes and pails, pickers can eat as much as they want without paying extra.

LITERALLY ripe for the picking are these cherries.

San Francisco, golden gate-way to northern California

THE BEAUTIFUL non-denominational Chapel of Stanford University, the heart of Silicon Valley

Text and photos by Linda B. Bohle

IT'S ALL RIGHT TO LEAVE YOUR heart in San Francisco. Just don't let that keep you from exploring the rest of the peninsula.

Through San Francisco's attractions are many—Embarcadero (lots in clubs, among others, the Fisherman's Wharf and Ghirardelli Square; Chinatown, cable car, Lombard Street, Alcatraz, to name some—the city's charms are enhanced by the ease it affords the traveler to visit many other places nearby exploring.

Whether you go up, down or sideways (as in the movies), take the Inbound Golden Gate Bridge or the mid-ocean San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, you are likely to end up somewhere pretty or simply interesting.

Posh Sausalito, a postcard pretty and primarily residential area where the well-to-do venture to escape the noise and hustle of the big metropolis, to just savour the bay, accessible through the Golden Gate Bridge or by ferry. Houses are built on hills, giving residents a panoramic view of the entire waters of the bay.

The Bay Bridge takes you to Oakland, of course, and the University of California Berkeley, site of so many student protests that, to many alumni of the University of the Philippines (particularly those with memories of political activism in the Philippines), it feels almost like their alma mater.

Another motifs of San Francisco are Sonoma and Napa Valleys, known primarily as wine countries. You can have a leisurely trip to Napa, made even more luxurious by the ride-all-as-classical movie "Sideways," and's to European-ambience—are so and acres of vineyards, broken occasionally by huge structures for wine-making and/or selling or warehouses.

The wine centers are made more pastoral by well-kept gardens which, in the seasons, are riotously bright with colored blooms.

Along the way to Napa, you can make brief stops in orchards where you can buy fruits that you pick yourself. This time of year, it is time for

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THE FABLED cable car remains an enduring symbol of the City by the Bay.

San Francisco, golden gate-way to northern California

Turn to page E3

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You may also want to have a look-see at the Swarovski factory outlet. But if you think you will not be able to resist the many goodies on offer at discounted prices by many leading brands, better make a whole day of the visit to Marseille and leave the temptations of Napa or any other destination in that direction for another day. It will take more than a few minutes to even fully the sprawling shopping complex, particularly if you are a shopaholic.

Northeast of San Francisco in Sacramento, the capital of California, awaits, like most American capitals, a all business and little fun. Still, you might be able to snatch a glimpse of the celebrity governor, the "Terminator" Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Just south of San Francisco, a semi-dormant neighbor, so to speak, is Daly City. Current permanents place the Filipino population at 40 percent of the total.

Techie haven

For the techies, south of San Francisco is the place-to-be—Silicon Valley. Though not really a geographical area, straddling as it does several cities, the Valley, of course, is all about information technology, microchips, semiconductors and computers. Current estimates place the number of IT-related companies in the Valley at 4,000, spread in an area along Highway 101, stretching from San Francisco to San Jose and reportedly generating some 130,000 billion to IT-related revenues annually.

At the center of the Valley is the beautiful manicured University (formal name: Leland Stanford Jr. University) at Palo Alto, a small, lovely affluent and predominantly outdoor (a) city. The core of the Stanford campus is laid out like a Spanish hacienda with adobe and brick buildings in earth tones.

Where Berkeley is cosmopolitan and irrepressible, the Palo Alto university is more formal and laidback.

A new and very comfortable train service now brings people to places south of San Francisco, including the international airport, which is almost halfway between the City by the Bay and Palo Alto. Buses also ply the route, but take 30 minutes longer than the train.

Other places close enough to visit from San Francisco are the beautiful Yosemite National Park to the east with its legendary cowpoints of giant redwoods, awe-inspiring peaks and snow falls; and, further south, picturesque Monterey and Carmel by the sea (Clint Eastwood was a former mayor) overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

CHARMING taverns and restaurants in the San Jose, or much further at night...make San Francisco one of the nicest places in the United States to visit in the summer.

A LARGE red heart marks the entrance to Union Square, venue for many outdoor art exhibits.